VIEWS OF RELIGION

BY

THEODORE PARKER

Central BAPTIST
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VIEWS OF RELIGION.

BY

THEODORE PARKER, 1810-1860

~~Born 1810 - D 1860~~ ~~Emerson~~
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With an Introduction,

BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

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INTRODUCTION.

There is no complete American edition of the works of Theodore Parker, and many of them are out of print. The American Unitarian Association publishes this volume of selections from his writings by permission of his friends. We hope that his entire works may one day be collected and published in this country, as they have been in England.

All of these writings, unless we except his translation of De Wette on the Old Testament, consist of occasional sermons, speeches, lectures, and essays in periodical works. In the pressure of such immediate demands, this most laborious of men never found time to compose an elaborate work. Always hoping to do so, and amply prepared with stores of thought and learning, the hour never came. In this, he resembled other eminent Americans, such as William Ellery Channing, Daniel Webster, Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, and Edward Everett. There is both advantage and disadvantage in thus spending one's strength on special occasions. There is greater immediate impression, but less permanent influence. Few care to read a volume of speeches delivered twenty or thirty years ago about matters which have lost their interest. The fame which comes from popular addresses, like that of a great actor, is remembered at last as a tradition; while, moreover, the style of such addresses tends to diffuseness, repetition, and the broad touches which please an audience.

From this tendency to oblivion Parker's writings are relatively saved by their learning and philosophy, and also because he made himself an integral part of two movements which have gone into history, — the antislavery movement in politics, and the broadening out of New England theology. The plan of this volume, as intended by the Publishing Committee, was simply to illustrate Mr. Parker's views of religion and theology. A more comprehensive selection would, of course, include examples of his method of treating public subjects, and show his interest in moral reforms and the practical questions of the hour.

Theodore Parker, an ardent controversialist, and vehement in expression, was sometimes unfair to his opponents. But he was never intentionally so. He had the magnanimity which enabled him readily to retract any statement which he saw was unfounded, or which could be misunderstood. He did so in one instance at my suggestion, because I told him that one of his expressions had been misunderstood by good people. His tremendous philippics against the defenders of slavery, and against those who were willing to return fugitives to their owners, though very severe, were caused by his profound sense of the iniquity of the system.

The theology of Theodore Parker was at first thought to be very radical, and was much censured. He returned the condemnation in full measure, using sometimes very bitter language. But with all this acrid speech, his disposition was kind and affectionate. He never forgot a friendly action, for his heart was as large as his brain.

Time and death soften animosities. The Unitarians have forgiven and forgotten his sharp speeches against them, and — what is often harder to forgive — their own sharp speeches against him. To-day, they only remember his loyalty to truth, his devotion to humanity, his scholarship, intelligence, and loving heart. Few persons would subscribe to his

theology. To many he still seems only partially to understand the work of Jesus, and to ignore some of the deeper experiences of the human soul. On the other hand, the current of what is called "advanced thought" has carried others far beyond his position. If he were living now, he would be thought by many to be much too conservative.

The work of Theodore Parker in theology was not essentially that of denial. He pulled down in order to build. He believed, with all his mind, heart, soul, and strength, in God, Duty, and Immortality. He could never accept in place of the living God any "stream of tendency," or "power not ourselves making for righteousness." To him God was personal Friend, universal Father, whose worship filled his mind and heart. An impersonal God was to him a contradiction in terms.

He was, in the profoundest depths of his belief, a transcendentalist. He never could suppose the idea of duty to be only a transformed sensation. To him it spoke with commanding voice as an innate idea, binding the soul to the law of universal righteousness.

Nor could he accept the sad doctrine that all of man ends with the present life. He saw in this life the beginning of perpetual development. He deemed this faith in immortality essential as a motive to endeavor, as a spring of progress, and as vital to a true view of the dignity of man.

The biography of Parker has been frequently written. The first and fullest, but without much arrangement, and poorly put together, is that by Weiss. The best is by O. B. Frothingham. From this last we quote some passages: —

"With him the religious sentiment was supreme. It had roots in his being wholly distinct from its mental or sensible forms of expression, — completely distinguished from theology, which

claimed to give an account of it in words; and from ceremonies, which claimed to embody it in rites and symbols. Never evaporating in mystical dreams, nor entangled in the meshes of cunning speculation, it preserved its freshness and bloom and fragrance in every passage of his life. His sense of the reality of divine things was as strong as was ever felt by a man of such clear intelligence. His feeling for divine things never lost its glow; never was damped by misgiving, dimmed by doubt, or clouded by sorrow. The intensity of his faith in Providence, and of his assurance of personal immortality, seems almost fanatical to modern men who sympathize in general with his philosophy. His confidence in the latter faith particularly, not all theists share. Yet to him it was native, instinctive (in a sense of spontaneous and irresistible), born of reverence, aspiration, trust, affection, which were ineradicable qualities of his being. So far from dreading to submit his faith to tests, he courted tests; was as eager to hear the arguments against his belief as for it; was as fair in weighing evidence on his opponent's side as on his own. 'Oh that mine adversary had written a book!' he was ready to cry, not that he might demolish it, but that he might read it. He knew the writings of Moleschott, and talked with him personally. The books of Carl Vogt were not strange to him. The philosophy of Ludwig Büchner, if philosophy it can be called, was as familiar to him as to any of Büchner's disciples. He was intimate with the thoughts of Feuerbach. He drew into discussion every atheist and materialist he met; talked with them closely, confidentially; and rose from the interview more confident in the strength of his own positions than ever. Darwin's first book, 'On the Origin of Species,' which was brought to him in Rome, contained nothing that disturbed him. He thought it unsupported in many of its facts, and hasty in its generalizations; but the doctrine itself was not offensive to him. Science he counted his best friend; relied on it for confirmation of his faith; and was only impatient because it moved no faster. All the materialists in and out of Christendom had no power to shake his conviction of the infinite God and the immortal existence; nor would have had, had he lived till he was a century old: for, in his view, the convictions were planted deep in human nature, and were demanded by the exigencies of human life."

In publishing this volume of selections from the writings of Theodore Parker, the Directors of the American Unitarian Association believe that they are meeting a want. Without professing to indorse or to reject the views expressed in this volume, they are glad to assist in circulating the ideas of one of the most able, earnest, and devout men of our time. The editor laments that he has been unable, from the necessary restriction of space, to give more numerous selections, which would have done larger justice to the author. He has sought to present specimens of some of the thoughts and themes which chiefly occupied the mind of this great thinker and reformer. His works, in the English edition already referred to, edited by Miss Frances Power Cobbe, and used in making this book, are contained in fourteen volumes, besides many reviews and separate publications, which have not been collected. The volumes are: —

I. A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion.
II. Ten Sermons of Religion, and Prayers.
III. Discourses of Theology.
IV. Discourses of Politics.
V. Discourses of Slavery. Vol. 1.
VI. Discourses of Slavery. Vol. 2.
VII. Discourses of Social Science.
VIII. Miscellaneous Discourses.
IX. Critical Writings. Vol. 1.
X. Critical Writings. Vol. 2.
XI. Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology.
XII. Autobiographical and Miscellaneous Pieces.
XIII. Historical Americans.
XIV. Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Man.

I would express, on behalf of the friends of Theodore Parker, their sense of obligation to Miss Cobbe, for her affectionate zeal and ability shown in making this collec-

tion. And I may take this opportunity to say how much the friends of good morals owe her for her constant advocacy of the highest principles of duty, and her energetic support of rational and spiritual religion.

I have taken nothing from the volumes of Slavery or of Politics, and little from the discourses of Polemical Theology. It has seemed best to confine the selections in this volume to the religious affirmations of Theodore Parker.

In closing, I would gratefully acknowledge, in my own behalf and that of the Association, the kindness of Mr. F. B. Sanborn, literary executor of Theodore Parker, for permission to use, for this book, any of the material under his control, and also that of Mr. Rufus Leighton, for similar liberty in regard to the volumes edited by him.

I am also indebted to Rev. Joseph Henry Allen for the sermon on Dr. Channing, which is not included in any of the volumes. The only copy I could find is in the Library of Harvard University. I hesitated about inserting it, because the author introduces it by expressing his sense of its imperfection; but it ought to be preserved as his testimony to the character of one whom he greatly revered.

J. F. C.

BOSTON, *November* 1, 1885.

VIEWS OF RELIGION.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN MAN.

As we look on the world which man has added to that which came from the hand of its Maker, we are struck with the variety of its objects and the contradiction between them. There are institutions to prevent crime; institutions that of necessity perpetuate crime. This is built on selfishness, — would stand by the downfall of justice and truth. Side by side therewith is another, whose broad foundation is universal love, — love for all that are of woman born. Thus we see palaces and hovels, jails and asylums for the weak, arsenals and churches, huddled together in the strangest and most intricate confusion. How shall we bring order out of this chaos; account for the existence of these contradictions? It is serious work to decompose these phenomena, so various and conflicting; to detect the one cause in the many results. But in doing this, we find the root of all in man himself. In him is the same perplexing antithesis which we meet in all his works. These conflicting things existed as ideas in him before they took their present and concrete shape. Discordant causes have produced effects not harmonious. Out of man these institutions have grown, — out of his passions or his judgment, his senses or his soul.

Taken together they are the exponent which indicates the character and degree of development the race has now attained; they are both the result of the past and the prophecy of the future.

From a survey of society and an examination of human nature we come at once to the conclusion, that for every institution out of man except that of religion there is a cause within him, either fleeting or permanent; that the natural wants of the body — the desire of food and raiment, comfort and shelter — have organized themselves, and instituted agriculture and the mechanic arts; that the more delicate principles of our nature — love of the beautiful, the true, the good — have their organization also; that the passions have their artillery, and all the gentler emotions somewhat external to represent themselves and reflect their image. Thus the institution of laws, with their concomitants the court-house and the jail, we refer to the moral sense of mankind, combining with the despotic selfishness of the strong, whose might often usurps the place of justice. Factories and commerce, railroads and banks, schools and shops, armies and newspapers, are quite easily referred to something analogous in the wants of man; to a lasting principle, or a transient desire, which has projected them out of itself. Thus we see that these institutions out of man are but the exhibitions of what is in him, and must be referred either to eternal principles or momentary passions. Society is the work of man. There is nothing in society which is not also in him.

Now there is one vast institution which extends more widely than human statutes; claims the larger place in human affairs; takes a deeper hold on men than the terrible pomp of war, the machinery of science, the panoply of comfort. This is the institution of religion, coeval

and coextensive with the human race. Whence comes this? Is there an eternal principle in us all which legitimately and of necessity leads to this; or does it come — like piracy, war, the slave-trade, and so much other business of society — from the abuse, misdirection, and disease of human nature? Shall we refer this vast institution to a passing passion which the advancing race will outgrow, or does it come from a principle in us deep and lasting as Man?

To this question for many ages two answers have been given, — one foolish and one wise. The foolish answer, which may be read in Lucretius and elsewhere, is that religion is not a necessity of man's nature, which comes from the action of eternal demands within him, but is the result of spiritual disease, so to say, — the effect of fear, of ignorance, combining with selfishness; that hypocritical priests and knavish kings, practising on the ignorance, the credulity, the passions, and the fears of men, invented for their own sake and got up a religion, in which they put no belief and felt no spiritual concern. But judging from a superficial view, it might as well be said that food and comfort were not necessities of our nature, but only cunning devices of butchers, mechanics, and artists, to gain wealth and power. Besides, it is not given to hypocrites under the mitre, nor over the throne, to lay hold on the world and move it; honest conviction and living faith are needed for that work. To move the world of men firm footing is needed. The hypocrite deceives few but himself, as the attempts at pious frauds in ancient and modern times abundantly prove.

The wise answer is, that this institution of religion — like society, friendship, and marriage — comes out of a principle deep and permanent in the constitution of man;

that as humble and transient and partial institutions come out of humble, transient, and partial wants, and are to be traced to the senses and the phenomena of life, — so this sublime, permanent, and universal institution came out from sublime, permanent, and universal wants, and must be referred to the soul, the religious faculty, and so belongs among the unchanging realities of life. Looking even superficially, but with earnestness, upon human affairs, we are driven to confess that there is in us a spiritual nature, which directly and legitimately leads to religion; that as man's body is connected with the world of matter, rooted in it, has bodily wants, bodily senses to minister thereto, and a fund of external materials wherewith to gratify these senses and appease these wants, — so man's soul is connected with the world of Spirit, rooted in God, has spiritual wants and spiritual senses, and a fund of materials wherewith to gratify these spiritual senses and appease these spiritual wants. If this be so, then do not religious institutions come equally from man? Must it not be that there is nothing in religion, more than in society, which is not implied in him?

Now, the existence of a religious element in us is not a matter of hazardous and random conjecture, nor attested only by a superficial glance at the history of man; but this principle is found out, and its existence demonstrated, in several legitimate ways.

We see the phenomena of worship and religious observances; of religious wants, and actions to supply those wants. Work implies a hand that did and a head that planned it. A sound induction from these facts carries us back to a religious principle in man, though the induction does not determine the nature of this principle, except that it is the cause of these phenomena. This

common and notorious fact of religious phenomena being found everywhere, can be explained only on the supposition that man is by the necessity of his nature inclined to religion; that worship in some form, gross or refined, in act or word or thought or life, is natural and quite indispensable to the race. If the opposite view be taken, that there is no religious principle in man, then there are permanent and universal phenomena without a corresponding cause; and the fact remains unexplained and unaccountable.

Again, we feel conscious of this element within us. We are not sufficient for ourselves; not self-originated, not self-sustained. A few years ago, and we were not; a few years hence, and our bodies shall not be. A mystery is gathered about our little life. We have but small control over things around us; are limited and hemmed in on all sides. Our schemes fail; our plans miscarry. One after another our lights go out; our realities prove dreams; our hopes waste away. We are not where we would be, nor what we would be. After much experience, men powerful as Napoleon, victorious as Cæsar, confess what simpler men knew by instinct long before, — that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We find our circumference very near the centre, everywhere. An exceedingly short radius measures all our strength. We can know little of material things; nothing but their phenomena. As the circle of our knowledge widens its ring, we feel our ignorance on more numerous points, and the unknown seems greater than before. At the end of a toilsome life we confess, with a great man of modern times, that we have wandered on the shore, and gathered here a bright pebble and there a shining shell; but an ocean of truth, boundless and unfathomed, lies before us, and all unknown. The

wisest ancient knew only this, — that he knew nothing. We feel an irresistible tendency to refer all outward things, and ourselves with them, to a power beyond us, sublime and mysterious, which we cannot measure nor even comprehend. We are filled with reverence at the thought of this power. Outward matters give us the occasion which awakens consciousness, and spontaneous nature leads us to something higher than ourselves and greater than all the eyes behold. We are bowed down at the thought. Thus the sentiment of something superhuman comes natural as breath. This primitive spiritual sensation comes over the soul when a sudden calamity throws us from our habitual state, when joy fills our cup to its brim, — at "a wedding or a funeral, a mourning or a festival;" when we stand beside a great work of nature, — a mountain, a waterfall; when the twilight gloom of a primitive forest sends awe into the heart; when we sit alone with ourselves, and turn in the eye and ask, What am I; whence came I; whither shall I go? There is no man who has not felt this sensation, this mysterious sentiment of something unbounded.

Still further, we arrive at the same result from a philosophical analysis of man's nature. We set aside the body with its senses as the man's house, having doors and windows; we examine the understanding, which is his handmaid; we separate the affections, which unite man with man; we discover the moral sense, by which we can discern between right and wrong, — as by the body's eye between black and white, or night and day: and behind all these, and deeper down, beneath all the shifting phenomena of life, we discover the *religious element of man.* Looking carefully at this element; separating this as a cause from its actions, and these from their effects; stripping this faculty of all accidental circumstances peculiar

to the age, nation, sect, or individual, and pursuing a sharp and final analysis till the subject and predicate can no longer be separated, — we find as the ultimate fact, that the religious element first manifests itself in our consciousness by a feeling of need, of want; in one word, by *a sense of dependence.* This primitive feeling does not itself disclose the character, and still less the nature and essence, of the object on which it depends, — no more than the senses disclose the nature of their objects; no more than the eye or ear discovers the essence of light or sound. Like them, it acts spontaneously and unconsciously, soon as the outward occasion offers, with no effort of will, forethought, or making up the mind.

Thus, then, it appears that induction from notorious facts, consciousness spontaneously active, and a philosophical analysis of our nature, all lead equally to some religious element or principle as an essential part of man's constitution. Now, when it is stated thus nakedly and abstractedly that man has in his nature a permanent religious element, it is not easy to see on what grounds this primary faculty can be denied by any thinking man who will notice the religious phenomena in history, trust his own consciousness, or examine and analyze the combined elements of his own being. It is true men do not often say to themselves, "Go to now. Lo, I have a religious element in the bottom of my heart." But neither do they often say, "Behold, I have hands and feet, and am the same being that I was last night or forty years ago." In a natural and healthy state of mind, men rarely speak or think of what is felt unconsciously to be most true and the basis of all spiritual action. It is, indeed, most abundantly established that there is a religious element in man.

Now, the existence of this religious element, our experience of this sense of dependence, this sentiment of something without bounds, is itself a proof by implication of the existence of its object, — something on which dependence rests. A belief in this relation between the feeling in us and its object independent of us, comes unavoidably from the laws of man's nature; there is nothing of which we can be more certain. A natural want in man's constitution implies satisfaction in some quarter, — just as the faculty of seeing implies something to correspond to this faculty; namely, objects to be seen, and a medium of light to see by. As the tendency to love implies something lovely for its object, so the religious consciousness implies its object. If it is regarded as a sense of absolute dependence, it implies the absolute on which this dependence rests, independent of ourselves.

Spiritual like bodily faculties act jointly, and not one at a time; and when the occasion is given from without us, the reason spontaneously, independent of our forethought and volition, acting by its own laws, gives us by intuition an *idea* of that on which we depend. To this idea we give the name of *God* or *Gods*, as it is represented by one or several separate conceptions. Thus the existence of God is implied by the natural sense of dependence, implied in the religious element itself; it is expressed by the spontaneous intuition of reason.

Now, men come to this idea early. It is the logical condition of all other ideas; without this as an element of our consciousness, or lying latent as it were and unrecognized in us, we could have no *ideas* at all. The senses reveal to us something external to the body, and independent thereof, on which it depends; they tell not what it is. Consciousness reveals something in like manner, — not the human spirit in me, but its absolute

ground, on which the spirit depends. Outward circumstances furnish the occasion by which we approach and discover the idea of God; but they do not furnish the idea itself: that is a fact given by the nature of man. Hence some philosophers have called it an innate idea; others, a reminiscence of what the spirit knew in a higher state of life before it took the body. Both opinions may be regarded as rhetorical statements of the truth that the idea of God is a fact given by man's nature, and not an invention or device of ours. The belief in God's existence therefore is natural, not against nature. It comes unavoidably from the legitimate action of the intellectual and the religious faculties, — just as the belief in light comes from using the eyes, and belief in our existence from mere existing. The knowledge of God's existence, therefore, may be called in the language of philosophy an *intuition of reason*; or in the mythological language of the elder theology, a *revelation from God.*

If the above statement be correct, then our belief in God's existence does not depend on the *à posteriori* argument, — on considerations drawn from the order, fitness, and beauty discovered by observations made in the material world; nor yet on the *à priori* argument, — on considerations drawn from the eternal nature of things, and observations made in the spiritual world. It depends primarily on no *argument* whatever; not on *reasoning*, but *reason.* The fact is given outright as it were, and comes to the man as soon and as naturally as the consciousness of his own existence, and is indeed logically inseparable from it, — for we cannot be conscious of ourselves except as *dependent* beings.

This intuitive perception of God is afterwards fundamentally and logically established by the *à priori*

argument, and beautifully confirmed by the *à posteriori* argument; but we are not left without the idea of God till we become metaphysicians and naturalists, and so can discover it by much thinking. It comes spontaneously, by a law of whose action we are at first not conscious. The belief always precedes the proof, intuition giving the thing to be reasoned about. Unless this intuitive function be performed, it is not possible to attain a knowledge of God; for all arguments to that end must be addressed to a faculty which cannot originate the idea of God, but only confirm it when given from some other quarter. Any argument is vain when the logical condition of all argument has not been complied with. If the reasoner, as Dr. Clarke has done, presuppose that his opponent has "no transcendent idea of God," all his reasoning could never produce it, howsoever capable of confirming and legitimating that idea if already existing in the consciousness. As we may speak of sights to the blind and sounds to the deaf, and convince them that things called sights and sounds actually exist, but can furnish no *idea* of those things when there is no corresponding sensation, — so we may convince a man's understanding of the soundness of our argumentation, but yet give him no idea of God unless he have previously an intuitive sense thereof. Without the intuitive perception, the metaphysical argument gives us only an idea of abstract power and wisdom: the argument from design gives only a limited and imperfect cause for the limited and imperfect effects. Neither reveals to us the infinite God.

The idea of God, then, transcends all possible external experience, and is given by intuition, or natural revelation, which comes of the joint and spontaneous action of reason and the religious element. Now, *theoretically*

this idea involves no contradiction, and is perfect: that is, when the proper conditions are complied with, and nothing disturbs the free action of the spirit, we receive the idea of a being infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, — that is, infinite, or perfect, in all possible relations. But *practically*, in the majority of cases, these conditions are not observed: men attempt to form a complex and definite *conception* of God. The primitive idea, eternal in man, is lost sight of. The conception of God, as men express it in their language, is always imperfect, — sometimes self-contradictory and impossible. Human actions, human thoughts, human feelings, — yes, human passions and all the limitations of mortal men, — are collected about the idea of God. Its primitive simplicity and beauty are lost. It becomes self-destructive; and the conception of God, as many minds set it forth, like that of a griffin or Centaur, or "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," is self-contradictory, — the notion of a being who from the very nature of things could not exist. They for the most part have been called atheists who denied the popular conception of God, showed its inconsistency, and proved that such a being could not be. The early Christians, and all the most distinguished and religious philosophers have borne that name, simply because they were too far before men for their sympathy, too far above them for their comprehension, and because, therefore, their idea of God was sublimer and nearer the truth than that held by their opponents.

Now, the *conception* we form of God, under the most perfect circumstances, must from the nature of things fall short of the reality. The finite can form no adequate conception or imagination of the infinite. All the conceptions of the human mind are conceived under

the limitation of time and space, of dependence on a cause exterior to itself; while the Infinite is necessarily free from these limitations. A man can comprehend no form of being but his own finite form, which answers to the Supreme Being even less than a grain of dust to the world itself. There is no conceivable ratio between finite and infinite. Our human personality gives a false modification to all our conceptions of the infinite. But if not resting in a merely sentimental consciousness of God, — which is vague, and alone leads rather to pantheistic mysticism than to a *reasonable* faith, — we take the fact given in our nature, the primitive idea of God as a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness involves no contradiction. This is perhaps the most faithful expression of the idea that words can convey. This language does not define the nature of God, but distinguishes our idea of him from all other ideas and conceptions whatever. Some great religious souls have been content with this native idea; have found it satisfactory both to faith and reason, and confessed with the ancients that no man by searching could perfectly find out God. Others project their own limitations upon their conception of God, making him to appear such an one as themselves: thus they reverse the saying of Scripture, and creating a phantom in their own image, call it God. Thus while the idea of God as a fact given in man's nature, and affording a consistent representation of its object, is permanent and alike in all; while a merely sentimental consciousness or feeling of God, though vague and mysterious, is always the same in itself, — the popular conception of God is of the most various and evanescent character, and is not the same in any two ages or men. The idea is the substance; the conception is a transient phenomenon, which at best only

imperfectly represents the substance. To possess the idea of God, though latent in us, is unavoidable; to feel its comfort is natural; to dwell in the sentiment of God is delightful: but to frame an adequate conception of deity, and set this forth in words, is not only above human capability, but impossible in the nature of things. The abyss of God is not to be fathomed save by Him who is All-in-all.

Now, this inborn religious faculty is the basis and cause of all religion. Without this internal religious element, either man could not have any religious notions, nor become religious at all, or else religion would be something foreign to his nature, which he might yet be taught mechanically from without, as bears are taught to dance and parrots to talk; but which, like this acquired and unnatural accomplishment of the beast and the bird, would divert him from his true nature and perfection, rendering him a monster, but less of a man than he would be without the superfetation of this religion upon him. Without a moral faculty, we could have no duties in respect to men; without a religious faculty, no duties in respect of God. The foundation of each is in man, not out of him. If man have not a religious element in his nature, miraculous or other "revelations" can no more render him religious than fragments of sermons and leaves of the Bible can make a lamb religious when mixed and eaten with its daily food. The law, the duty, and the destiny of man, as of all God's creatures, are writ in himself, and by the Almighty's hand. The religious element existing within us, and this alone, renders religion the duty, the privilege, and the welfare of mankind. Thus religion is not a superinduction upon the race as some would make it appear, not an after-

thought of God interpolated in human affairs when the work was otherwise complete; but it is an original necessity of our nature. The religious element is deep and essentially laid in the very constitution of man.

I. Now, this religious element is universal. This may be proved in several ways. Whatever exists in the fundamental nature of one man exists likewise in all men, though in different degrees and variously modified by different circumstances. Human nature is the same in the men of all races, ages, and countries. Man remains always identical; only the differing circumstances of climate, condition, culture, race, nation, and individual modify the manifestations of what is at bottom the same. Races, ages, nations, and individuals differ only in the various degrees they possess of particular faculties, and in the development or the neglect of these faculties. When, therefore, it is shown that the religious sentiment exists as a natural principle in any one man, its existence in all other men that are, were, or shall be, follows unavoidably from the unity of human nature.

Again, the universality of the religious element is confirmed by historical arguments, which also have some force. We discover religious phenomena in all lands, wherever man has advanced above the primitive condition of mere animal wildness. Of course there must have been a period in his development when the religious faculties had not come to conscious activity; but after that state of spiritual infancy is passed by, religious emotions appear in the rudest and most civilized state,—among the cannibals of New Zealand and the refined voluptuaries of old Babylon; in the Esquimaux fisherman and the Parisian philosopher. The subsequent history of men shows no period in which these phenomena do not appear; man worships, feels

dependence and accountability, religious fear or hope, and gives signs of these spiritual emotions all the world over. No nation with fire and garments has been found so savage that they have not attained this; none so refined as to outgrow it. The widest observation, therefore, as well as a philosophical deduction from the nature of man, warrants the conclusion that this sentiment is universal.

But at first glance there are some apparent exceptions to this rule. A few persons from time to time arise and claim the name of atheist. But even these admit they feel this religious tendency; they acknowledge a sense of dependence, which they refer, not to the sound action of a natural element in their constitution, but to a disease thereof, to the influence of culture or the instruction of their nurses, and count it an obstinate disease of their mind, or else a prejudice early imbibed and not easily removed. Even if some one could be found who denied that he ever felt any religious emotion whatever, however feebly, — this would prove nothing against the universality of its existence, and no more against the general rule of its manifestation than the rare fact of a child born with a single arm proves against the general rule that man by nature has two arms.

Again, travellers tell us some nations with considerable civilization have no God, no priests, no worship, and therefore give no sign of the existence of the religious element in them. Admitting they state a fact, we are not to conclude the religious element is wanting in the savages; only that they, like infants, have not attained the proper stage when we could discover signs of its action. But these travellers are often mistaken. Their observations have in such cases been superficial, made with but a slight knowledge of the manners and customs of the nation they treat. And, besides, their

prejudice blinded their eyes. They looked for a regular worship, doctrines of religion, priests, temples, images, forms, and ceremonies. But there is one stage of religious consciousness in which none of these signs appear, and yet the religious element is at its work. The travellers, not finding the usual signs of worship, denied the existence of worship itself, and even of any religious consciousness in the nation. But if they had found a people ignorant of cookery and without the implements of that art, it would be quite as wise to conclude from this negative testimony that the nation never ate nor drank. On such evidence, the early Christians were convicted of atheism by the Pagans, and subsequently the Pagans by the Christians.

There is still one other case of apparent exception to the rule. Some persons have been found who in early childhood were separated from human society, and grew up towards the years of maturity in an isolated state, having no contact with their fellow-mortals. These give no signs of any religious element in their nature. But other universal faculties of the race, the tendency to laugh, and to speak articulate words, give quite as little sign of their existence. Yet when these unfortunate persons are exposed to the ordinary influence of life, the religious, like other faculties, does its work. Hence we may conclude it existed, though dormant until the proper conditions of its development were supplied.

These three apparent exceptions serve only to confirm the rule that the religious sentiment, like the power of attention, thought, and love, is universal in the race. Yet it is plain that there was a period in which the primitive wild man, without language or self-consciousness, gave no sign of any religious faculty at all; still the original element lay in this baby-man.

However, like other faculties, this is possessed in different degrees by different races, nations, and individuals, and at particular epochs of the world's or the individual's history acquires a predominance it has not at other times. It seems God never creates two races, nations, or men, with precisely the same endowments. There is a difference, more or less striking, between the intellectual, æsthetic, and moral development of two races or nations, or even between two men of the same race and nation. This difference seems to be the effect, not merely of the different circumstances whereto they are exposed, but also of the different endowments with which they set out. If we watch in history the gradual development and evolution of the human race, we see that one nation takes the lead in the march of mind, pursues science, literature, and the arts; another in war, and the practical business of political thrift; while a third nation, prominent neither for science nor political skill, takes the lead in religion, and in the comparative strength of its religious consciousness surpasses both.

Three forms of monotheistic religion have, at various times, come up in the world's history. Two of them at this moment perhaps outnumber the votaries of all other religions, and divide between them the more advanced civilization of mankind. These three are the Mosaic, the Christian, and the Mahometan; all recognizing the unity of God, the religious nature of man, and the relation between God and man. All of these, surprising as it is, came from one family of men, the Shemitic, who spoke in substance the same language, lived in the same country, and had the same customs and political institutions. Even that wide-spread and more monstrous form of religion which our fathers had in the wilds of Europe betrays its likeness to this Oriental stock; and

that form, still earlier, which dotted Greece all over with its temples, filling the isles of the Mediterranean with its solemn and mysterious chant, came apparently from the same source. The beautiful spirit of the Greek, modified, enlarged, and embellished what Oriental piety at first called down from the Empyrean. The nations now at the head of modern civilization have not developed independently their power of creative religious genius, so to say; for each form of worship that has prevailed with them was originally derived from some other race. These nations are more scientific than religious, reflective rather than spontaneous, utilitarian more than reverential; and, so far as history relates, have never yet created a permanent form of religion which has extended to other families of men. Their faith, like their choicer fruits, is an importation from abroad, not an indigenous plant, though now happily naturalized, and rendered productive in their soil. Of all nations hitherto known, these are the most disposed to reflection, literature, science, and the practical arts; while the Shemitish tribes in their early age were above all others religious, and have had an influence in religious history entirely disproportionate to their numbers, their art, their science, or their laws. Out of the heart of this ancient family of nations flowed forth that triple stream of pious life which even now gives energy to the pulsations of the world. Egypt and Greece have stirred the intellect of mankind, and spoken to our love of the grand, the beautiful, the true, to faculties that lie deep in us. But this Oriental people have touched the soul of men, and awakened reverence for the good, the holy, the altogether beautiful which lies in the profoundest deep of all. The religious element appears least conspicuous, it may be, in some nations of Australia, — perhaps the most bar-

barous of men. With savages in general it is in its infancy, like all the nobler attributes of man; but as they develop their nature, this faculty becomes more and more apparent.

II. Again, this element is indestructible in human nature. It is not in the power of caprice within, nor external circumstances, — war or peace, freedom or slavery, ignorance or refinement, — wholly to abolish or destroy it. Its growth may be retarded or quickened, its power misdirected or suffered to flow in its proper channel; but no violence from within, no violence from without, can ever destroy this element. It were as easy to extirpate hunger and thirst from the sound living body as this element from the spirit. It may sleep, it never dies. Kept down by external force to-day, it flames up to heaven in streams of light to-morrow. When perverted from its natural course, it writes in devastation its chronicles of wrongs, — a horrid page of human history which proves its awful power, as the strength of the human muscle is proved by the distortions of the maniac. Sensual men, who hate the restraints of religion, who know nothing of its encouragements, strive to pluck up by the roots this plant which God has set in the midst of the garden. But there it stands, — the tree of knowledge, the tree of life. Even such as boast the name of infidel and atheist find, unconsciously, repose in its wide shadow, and refreshment in its fruit. It blesses obedient men. He who violates the divine law, and thus would wring this feeling from his heart, feels it, like a heated iron, in the marrow of his bones.

III. Still further, this religious element is the strongest and deepest in human nature. It depends on nothing outside, conventional, or artificial. It is identical in

all men; not a similar thing, but the same. Superficially, man differs from man, in the less and more; but in the nature of the primitive religious element all agree, as in whatever is deepest. Out of the profoundest abyss in man proceed his worship, his prayer, his hymn of praise. The history of the world shows us what a space religion fills. She is the mother of philosophy and the arts; has presided over the greatest wars. She holds now all nations with her unseen hand; restrains their passions, more powerful than all the cunning statutes of the lawgiver; awakens their virtue; allays their sorrows with a mild comfort all her own; brightens their hopes with the purple ray of faith, shed through the sombre curtains of necessity.

Religious emotion often controls society, inspires the lawgiver and the artist, — is the deep-moving principle; it has called forth the greatest heroism of past ages; the proudest deeds of daring and endurance have been done in its name. Without religion, all the sages of a kingdom cannot build a city; but with it, how a rude fanatic sways the mass of men! The greatest works of human art have risen only at religion's call. The marble is pliant at her magic touch, and seems to breathe a pious life. The chiselled stone is instinct with a living soul, and stands there silent, yet full of hymns and prayers, — an embodied aspiration, a thought with wings that mock at space and time. The temples of the East, the cathedrals of the West, altar and column and statue and image, — these are the tribute Art pays to her. Whence did Michael Angelo, Phidias, Praxiteles, and all the mighty sons of Art who chronicled their awful thoughts in stone, shaping brute matter to a divine form, building up the Pyramid and Parthenon, or forcing the hard elements to swell into the arch, aspire into the

dome or the fantastic tower, — whence did they draw their inspiration? All their greatest wonders are wrought in religion's name. In the very dawn of time, Genius looks through the clouds, and lifts up his voice in hymns and songs and stories of the gods; and the Angel of Music carves out her thanksgiving, her penitence, her prayers for man, on the unseen air, as a votive gift for her. Her sweetest note, her most majestic chant, she breathes only at religion's call. Thus it has always been. A thousand men will readily become celibate monks for religion. Would they for gold, or ease, or fame?

The greatest sacrifices ever made are offered in the name of religion. For this a man will forego ease, peace, friends, society, wife, and child, — all that mortal flesh holds dearest: no danger is too dangerous, no suffering too stern to bear, if Religion say the word. Simeon the Stylite will stay years long on his pillar's top, the devotee of Buddha tear off his palpitating flesh to serve his god. The Pagan idolater, bowing down to a false image of stone, renounces his possessions; submits to barbarous and cruel rites, shameful mutilation of his limbs; gives the first-born of his body for the sin of his soul; casts his own person to destruction, because he dreams Baal or Saturn, Jehovah or Moloch, demands the sacrifice. The Christian idolater, doing equal homage to a lying thought, gives up common-sense, reason, conscience, love of his brother, at the same fancied mandate; is ready to credit most obvious absurdities, accept contradictions, do what conflicts with the moral sense, believe dogmas that make life dark, eternity dreadful, man a worm and God a tyrant, — dogmas that make him count as cursed half his brother men, — because told such is his duty, in the name of religion. In this

name Thomas More, the ablest head of his times, will believe a bit of bread becomes the Almighty God, when a lewd priest but mumbles his juggling Latin and lifts up his hands. In our day, heads as able as Thomas More's believe doctrines quite as absurd, because taught as religion and God's command. In its behalf, the foolishest teaching becomes acceptable; the foulest doctrines, the grossest conduct, crimes that, like the fabled banquet of Thyestes, might make the sun sicken at the sight and turn back affrighted in his course, — these things are counted as beautiful, superior to reason, acceptable to God. The wicked man may bless his brother in crime, the unrighteous blast the holy with his curse; and devotees shall shout "Amen" to both the blessing and the ban.

On what other authority have rites so bloody been accepted; or doctrines so false to reason, so libellous of God? For what else has man achieved such works and made such sacrifice? In what name but this will the man of vast and far out-stretching mind, the counsellor, the chief, the sage, the native king of men, forego the vastness of his thought, put out his spirit's eyes, and bow him to a drivelling wretch who knows nothing but treacherous mummery and juggling tricks? In religion this has been done from the first false prophet to the last false priest; and the pride of the understanding is abashed, the supremacy of reason degraded, the majesty of conscience trampled on, the beautifulness of faith and love trodden down into the mire of the streets. The hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the tongue, the most sacred members of the body; judgment, imagination, the overmastering faculties of mind; justice, mercy, and love, the fairest affections of the soul, — all these have been reckoned a poor and paltry sacrifice, and

lopped off at the shrine of God as things unholy. This has been done, not only by Pagan polytheists and savage idolaters, but by Christian devotees, accomplished scholars, the enlightened men of enlightened times.

These melancholy results, which are but aberrations of the religious element, the disease of the baby, not the soundness of mankind, have often been confounded with religion itself, regarded as the legitimate fruit of the religious faculty. Hence men have said, "Such results prove that religion itself is a popular fury, the foolishness of the people, the madness of mankind." They prove a very different thing. They show the depth, the strength, the awful power of that element which thus can overmaster all the rest of man, — passion and conscience, reason and love. Tell a man his interest requires a sacrifice, he hesitates; convince him his religion demands it, and crowds rush at once, and joyful, to a martyr's fiery death. It is the best things that are capable of the worst abuse: the very abuse may test the value.

The legitimate action of the religious element produces reverence. This reverence may ascend into trust, hope, and love, which is according to its nature; or descend into doubt, fear, and hate, which is against its nature: it thus rises or falls, as it coexists in the individual with wisdom and goodness, or with ignorance and vice. However, the legitimate and normal action of the religious element leads ultimately, and of necessity, to reverence, absolute trust, and perfect love of God. These are the result only of its sound and healthy action.

Now, there can be but one kind of religion, as there can be but one kind of time and space. It may exist in different degrees, weak or powerful; in combination with

other emotions, love or hate, with wisdom or folly; and thus it is superficially modified, just as love, which is always the same thing, is modified by the character of the man who feels it, and by that of the object to which it is directed. Of course, then, there is no difference but of words between *revealed* religion and *natural* religion; for all actual religion is revealed in us, or it could not be felt, and all revealed religion is natural, or it would be of no use. What is of use to a man comes upon the plane of his consciousness, not merely above it, or below it. We may regard religion from different points of view, and give corresponding names to our partial conceptions, which we have purposely limited; and so speak of natural and revealed religion, monotheistic, polytheistic, or pantheistic, Pagan, Jewish, Christian, Mahometan religion. But in these cases the distinction indicated by the terms belongs to the thinker's mind, — not to religion itself, the object of thought. Historical phenomena of religion vary in the more and less. Some express it purely and beautifully; others mingle foreign emotions with it, and but feebly represent the pious feeling.

To determine the question what is absolute — that is, perfect — religion, religion with no limitation, we are not to gather to a focus the scattered rays of all the various forms under which religion has appeared in history, for we can never collect the absolute from any number of imperfect phenomena; and, besides, in making the search and forming an eclecticism from all the historical religious phenomena, we presuppose in ourselves the criterion by which they are judged, — namely, the absolute itself which we seek to construct, — and thus move only in a circle, and end where we began. To answer the question, we must go back to the primitive facts of

religious consciousness within us. Then we find religion is *voluntary obedience to the law of God, inward and outward obedience* to that law he has written on our nature, revealed in various ways through instinct, reason, conscience, and the religious emotions. Through it we regard Him as the absolute object of reverence, faith, and love. This obedience may be unconscious, as in little children who have known no contradiction between duty and desire; and perhaps involuntary in the perfect saint, to whom all duties are desirable, who has ended the contradiction by willing himself God's will, and thus becoming one with God. It may be conscious, as with many men whose strife is not yet over. It seems the highest and completest mode of religion must be self-conscious, — free goodness, free piety, and free, self-conscious trust in God.

Now, there are two tendencies connected with religion: one is speculative; here the man is intellectually employed in matters pertaining to religion, to God, to man's religious nature, and his relation and connection with God. The result of this tendency is theology. This is not religion itself; it is men's thought about religion, — the philosophy of divine things, the science of religion; its sphere is the mind of men. Religion and theology are no more to be confounded than the stars with astronomy.

While the religious element, like the intellectual or the moral, or human nature itself, remains ever the same, the religious consciousness of mankind is continually progressive; and so theology, which is the intellectual expression thereof, advances, like all other science, from age to age. The most various theological doctrines exist in connection with religious emotions, helping or hindering man's general development. The highest notion I

can form of religion is this, which I called the absolute religion: conscious service of the infinite God by keeping every law he has enacted into the constitution of the universe,—service of Him by the normal use, discipline, development, and delight of every limb of the body, every faculty of the spirit, and so of all the powers we possess.

The other tendency is practical; here the man is employed in acts of obedience to religion. The result of this tendency is morality. This alone is not religion itself, but one part of the life religion demands. There may be morality deep and true with little or no purely religious consciousness; for a sharp analysis separates between the religious and moral elements in a man. Morality is the harmony between man's action and the natural law of God. It is a part of religion which includes it "as the sea her waves." In its highest form morality doubtless implies religious emotions, but not necessarily the self-consciousness thereof. For though piety, the love of God, and benevolence, the love of man, do logically involve each other, yet experience shows that a man may see and observe the distinction between right and wrong, clearly and disinterestedly, without consciously feeling, as such, reverence, or love of God; that is, he may be truly moral up to a certain point, without being consciously religious, though he cannot be truly religious without at the same time being moral also. But in a harmonious man, the two are practically inseparable as substance and form. The merely moral man, in the actions, thoughts, and feelings which relate to his fellow-mortal, obeys the eternal law of duty revealed in his nature, as such, and from love of that law, without regard to its Author. The religious man obeys the same law, but regards it as the will of God. One rests in the law, the other only in its Author.

Now, in all forms of religion there must be a common element which is the same thing in each man; not a similar thing, but just the same thing, different only in degree, not in kind, and in its direction towards one or many objects; in both of which particulars it is influenced in some measure by external circumstances. Then, since men exist under most various conditions and in widely different degrees of civilization, it is plain that the religious consciousness must appear under various forms, accompanied with various doctrines as to the number and nature of its objects, the deities; with various rites, forms, and ceremonies, as it means to appease, propitiate, and serve these objects; with various organizations, designed to accomplish the purposes which it is supposed to demand; and, in short, with apparently various and even opposite effects upon life and character. As all men are at bottom the same, but as no two nations or ages are exactly alike in character, circumstances, or development, so, therefore, though the religious element be the same in all, we must expect to find that its manifestations are never exactly alike in any two ages or nations, though they give the same name to their form of worship. If we look still more minutely, we see that no two men are exactly alike in character, circumstances, and development, and, therefore, that no two men can exhibit their religion in just the same way, though they kneel at the same altar, and pronounce the same creed. From the difference between men, it follows that there must be as many different subjective conceptions of God, and forms of religion, as there are men and women who think about God, and apply their thoughts and feelings to life. Hence, though the religious faculty be always the same in all, the doctrines of religion, or theology; the forms of religion, or mode of worship; and the prac-

tice of religion, which is morality, cannot be the same thing in any two men, though one mother bore them, and they were educated in the same way. The conception we form of God, our notion about man, — of the relation between him and God, of the duties which grow out of that relation, — may be taken as the exponent of all the man's thoughts, feelings, and life. They are therefore alike the measure and the result of the total development of a man, an age, or race. If these things are so, then the phenomena of religion — like those of science and art — must vary from land to land, and age to age, with the varying civilization of mankind; must be one thing in New Zealand, and the first century, and something quite different in New England, and the fifty-ninth century. They must be one thing in the wise man, and another in the foolish man. They must vary also in the same individual, for a man's wisdom, goodness, and general character, affect the phenomena of his religion. The religion of the boy and the man, of Saul the youth, and Paul the aged, how unlike they appear. The boy's prayer will not fill the man's heart; nor can the stripling son of Zebedee comprehend that devotion and life which he shall enjoy when he becomes the saint mature in years.

NATURALISM, SUPERNATURALISM, AND SPIRITUALISM.

NATURALISM allows that the original powers of nature, as shown in the inorganic, the vegetable, and the animal world, all came from God at the first; that he is a principle either material or spiritual, separate from the world, and independent thereof. He made the world and all things, including man, and stamped on them certain laws, which they are to keep. He was but transiently present and active in nature at creation; is not immanently present and active therein. He has now nothing to do with the world but to see it go. Here, then, is God on the one side; on the other, man and nature. But there is a great gulf fixed between them, over which there passes neither God nor man.

This theory teaches that man, in addition to his organs of perception, has certain intellectual faculties by which he can reason from effect to cause; can discover truth, which is the statement of a fact; from a number of facts in science can discern a scientific law, the relation of thing to thing; from a number of facts in morals can learn the relation of man to man, deduce a moral law which shall teach the most expedient and profitable way of managing affairs. Its statement of both scientific and moral facts rests solely on experience, and never goes beyond the precedents. Still further, it allows that men can find out there is a God by reasoning experimentally from observations in the material world, and metaphysi-

cally also from the connection of notions in the mind. But this conclusion is only to be reached in either case by a process that is long, complicated, tortuous, and so difficult that but one man in some thousands has the necessary experimental knowledge, and but one in some millions the metaphysical subtlety requisite to go through it and become certain that there is a God. Its notion of God is this, — a Being who exists as the power, mind, and will that caused the universe.

The metaphysical philosophy of this system may be briefly stated. In man by nature there is nothing but man; there is but one channel by which knowledge can come into man; that is sensation, perception through the senses. That is an assumption, nobody pretends it is proved. This knowledge is modified by reflection, — the mind's process of ruminating upon the knowledge which sensation affords. At any given time, therefore, if we examine what is in man we find nothing which has not first been in the senses. Now, the senses converse only with finite phenomena. Reflection — what can it get out of these? The absolute? The premise does not warrant the conclusion. Something "as good as infinite"? Let us see. It makes a scientific law a mere generalization from observed facts which it can never go beyond. Its science, therefore, is in the rear of observation; we do not know thereby whether the next stone shall fall to the ground or from it. All it can say of the universality of any law of science is this, "So far as we have seen, it is so." It cannot pass from the particular to the universal. It makes a moral law the result of external experience, merely an induction from moral facts, not the affirmation of man's moral nature declaring the eternal rule of right. It learns morality by seeing what plan succeeds best in the long run. Its

morality, therefore, is selfishness verified by experiment. A man in a new case, for which he can find no precedents, knows not what to do. He is never certain he is right till he gets the reward. Its moral law at present, like the statute law, is the slowly elaborated product of centuries of experience. It pretends to find out God as a law in science solely by reasoning from effect to cause, from a plan to the designer. Then on what does a man's belief in God depend? On man's nature acting spontaneously? No; for there is nothing in man but man, and nothing comes in but sensations which do not directly give us God. It depends on reflection, argument, that process of reasoning mentioned before. Now, admitting that sensation affords sufficient premise for the conclusion, there is a difficulty in the way. The man must either depend on his own reasoning or that of another. In the one case he may be mistaken, in an argument so long, crooked, and difficult. It is at best an inference. The "hypothesis of a God," as some impiously call it, may thus rest on no better argument than the hypothesis of vortices or epicycles. In the other case, if we trust another man he may be mistaken; still worse, may design to deceive the inquirer, as we are told the heathen sages did. Where, then, is the certain conviction of any God at all? This theory allows none; its "proof of the existence of God" is a proof of the possibility of a God, perhaps of his probability, — surely no more.

But the case is yet worse. In any argumentation there must be no more expressed in the conclusion than is logically and confessedly implied in the premises. When finite phenomena are the only premises, whence comes the idea of infinite God? It denies that man has any idea of the absolute, infinite, perfect. Instead of

this, it allows only an accumulative notion, formed from a series of conceptions of what is finite and imperfect. The little we can know of God came from reasoning about objects of sense. Its notion of God is deduced purely from empirical observation; what notion of a God can rest legitimately on that basis? Nature is finite; to infer an infinite author is false logic. We see but in part, and have not grasped up this sum of things, nor seen how seeming evil consists with real good, nor accounted for the great amount of misery, apparently unliquidated, in the world; therefore nature is imperfect to men's eyes. Why infer a perfect author from an imperfect work? Injustice and cruelty are allowed in the world. How then can its Maker be relied on as just and merciful? Let there be nothing in the conclusion which is not in the premises.

This theory gives us only a finite and imperfect God, which is no God at all. He cannot be trusted out of sight; for its faith is only an inference from what is seen. Instead of a religious sentiment in man, which craves all the perfections of the Godhead, reaches out after the infinite "first good, first perfect, and first fair," it gives us only a tendency to reverence or fear what is superior to ourselves, and above our comprehension,—a tendency which the bat and the owl have in common with Socrates and Fénelon. It makes a man the slave of his organization. Free-will is not possible. His highest aim is self-preservation; his greatest evil death. It denies the immortality of man, and foolishly asks "proofs" of the fact,—meaning proofs palpable to the senses. Its finite God is not to be trusted, except under his bond and covenant to give us what we ask for.

It makes no difference between good and evil; expedient and inexpedient are the better words. These are to

be learned only by long study and much cunning. All men have not the requisite skill to find out moral and religious doctrines, and no means of proving either in their own heart; therefore they must take the word of their appointed teachers and philosophers, who "have investigated the matter;" found there is "an expedient way" for men to follow, and a "God" to punish them if they do not follow it. In moral and religious matters the mass of men must rely on the authority of their teachers. Millions of men, who never made an astronomical observation, believe the distance between the earth and the sun is what Newton or Laplace declares it to be. Why should not men take moral and religious doctrines on the same evidence? It is true, astronomers have differed a little, — some making the earth the centre, some the sun, — and divines still more. But men must learn the moral law as the statute law. The State is above each man's private notions about good and evil, and controls these, as well as their passions. Man must act always from mean and selfish views, never from love of the good, the beautiful, the true.

This system would have religious forms and ceremonies to take up the mind of the people; moral precepts, and religious creeds, "published by authority," to keep men from unprofitable crimes; an established church, like the jail and the gallows, a piece of State-machinery. It is logical in this, for it fears that without such a provision the sensual nature would overlay the intellectual; the few religious ideas common men could get, would be so shadowy and uncertain, and men be so blinded by prejudice, superstition, and fancy, or so far misled by passion and ignorant selfishness, that nothing but want and anarchy would ensue. It tells men to pray. None can escape the conviction that prayer, vocal

or silent, put up as a request, or felt as a sense of supplication, is natural as hunger and thirst, or tears and smiles. Even a self-styled atheist[1] talks of the important physiological functions of prayer. This theory makes prayer a soliloquy of the man, a thinking with the upper part of the head, a sort of moral gymnastics. Thereby we get nothing from God. He is the other side of the world. "He is a journeying, or pursuing, or peradventure he sleepeth." Prayer is useful to the worshipper as the poet's frenzy, when he apostrophizes a mountain or the moon, and works himself into a rapture, but gets nothing from the mountain or the moon except what he carried out. In a word, this theory reduces the idea of God to that of an abstract cause, and excludes this cause both from man and the world. It has only a finite God, which is no God at all, for the two terms cancel each other. It has only a selfish morality, which is no morality at all, for the same reason. It reduces the soul to the aggregate functions of the flesh; providence to a law of matter; infinity to a dream; religion to priestcraft; prayer to an apostrophe; morality to making a good bargain; conscience to cunning; it denies the possibility of any connection between God and man. Revelation and inspiration it regards as figures of speech, by which we refer to an agency purely ideal what was the result of the senses, and matter acting thereon. Men calling themselves inspired, speaking in the name of God, were deceivers or deceived. Prophets, the religious geniuses of the world, mistook their fancies for revelation, embraced a cloud instead of a goddess, and produced only misshapen dreams. Judged by this system, Jesus of Nazareth was a pure-minded fanatic, who knew no more about God than Peter Bayle and Pompon-

[1] M. Comte.

atius, but yet did the world service, by teaching the result of his own or others' experience, as revelations from God accompanied with the promise of another life; which is reckoned a pleasant delusion, useful to keep men out of crime, — a clever auxiliary of the powers that be.

This system has perhaps never been held in all its parts by any one man, but each portion has often been defended, and all its parts go together and come unavoidably from that notion, that there is nothing in man which was not first in the senses. The best representatives of this school were, it may be, the French materialists of the last century, and some of the English deists. The latter term is applied to men of the most various character and ways of thinking. Some of them were most excellent men in all respects, — men who did mankind great service by exposing the fanaticism of the superstitious, and by showing the absurdities embraced by many of the Christians. Some of them were much more religious and heavenly-minded than their opponents, and had a theology much more Christian, which called goodness by its proper name, and worshipped God in lowliness of heart, and a divine life. But the spirit of this system takes different forms in different men. It appears in the cold morality and repulsive forms of religion of Dr. Priestley, who was yet one of the best of men; in the scepticism of Hume and his followers, which has been a useful medicine to the Church; in the selfish system of Paley, far more dangerous than the doubts of Hume or the scoffs of Gibbon and Voltaire; in the coarse, vulgar materialism of Hobbes, who may be taken as one of the best representatives of the system.

It is obvious enough that this system of naturalism is the philosophy which lies at the foundation of the popular

theology in New England; that it is very little understood by the men, out of pulpits and in pulpits, who adhere to it; who, while they hold fast to the theory of the worst of the English deists, though of only the worst, — while they deny the immanence of God in matter and man, and therefore take away the possibility of natural inspiration, and cling to that system of philosophy which justifies the doubt of Hume, the selfishness of Paley, the coarse materialism of Hobbes, — are yet ashamed of their descent, and seek to point out others, of a quite different spiritual complexion, as the lineal descendants of that ancient stock.

This system has one negative merit. It can, as such, never lead to fanaticism. Those sects or individuals who approach most nearly to pure naturalism have never been accused, in religious matters, of going too fast or too far. But it has a positive excellence; it lays great stress on the human mind, and cultivates the understanding to the last degree. However, its philosophy, its theology, its worship, are of the senses, and the senses alone.

Supernaturalism differs in many respects from the other system; but its philosophy is at bottom the same. It denies that by natural action there can be anything in man which was not first in the senses; whatever transcends the senses can come to him only by a miracle. And the miracle is attended with phenomena obvious to the senses. To develop the natural side of the theory, it sets God on the one side and man on the other. However, it admits the immanence of God in matter, and talks very little about the laws of matter, which it thinks require revision, amendment, and even repeal, — as if the nature of things changed, or God grew wiser by experi-

ment. It does not see that if God is always the same, and immanent in nature, the laws of nature can neither change nor be changed. It limits the power of man still further than the former theory. It denies that he can, of himself, discover the existence of God, or find out that it is better to love his brother than to hate him, — to subject the passions to reason, desire to duty, rather than to subject reason to passion, duty to desire. Man can find out all that is needed for his animal and intellectual welfare with no miracle, but can learn nothing that is needed for his moral and religious welfare. He can invent the steam engine, and calculate the orbit of Halley's comet; but cannot tell good from evil, nor determine that there is a God. The unnecessary is given him, the indispensable he cannot get by nature. Man, therefore, is the veriest wretch in creation. His mind forces him to inquire on religious matters, but brings him into doubt, and leaves him in the very slough of despond. He goes up and down sorrowing, seeking rest but finding none. Nay; it goes further still, and declares that, by nature, all men's actions are sin, hateful to God.

On the other hand, it teaches that God works a miracle from time to time, and makes to men a positive revelation of moral and religious truth, which they could not otherwise gain. Its history of revelations is this: God revealed his own existence in a visible form to the first man; taught him religious and moral duties by words orally spoken. The first man communicated this knowledge to his descendants, from whom the tradition of the fact has spread over all the world. Men know there is a God, and a distinction between right and wrong, only by hearsay, as they know there was a flood in the time of Noah, or Deucalion. The first man sinned, and fell

from the state of frequent communion with God. Revelations have since become rare, — exceptions in the history of men. However, as man having no connection with the Infinite must soon perish, God continued to make miraculous revelations to one single people. To them he gave laws, religious and civil, made predictions, and accompanied each revelation by some miraculous sign; for without it none could distinguish the truth from a lie. Other nations received reflections of this light which was directly imparted to the favored people. At length he made a revelation of all religious and moral truth, by means of his Son, a divine and miraculous being, both God and man, and confirmed the tidings by miracles the most surprising. As this revelation is to last for ever, it has been recorded miraculously, and preserved for all coming time. The persons who received direct communication miraculously from God are of course mediators between Him and the human race.

Now, to live as religious men, we must have a knowledge of religious truth; for this we must depend alone on these mediators; without them we have no access to God. They have established a new relation between man and God. But they are mortal, and have deceased. However, their sayings are recorded by miraculous aid. A knowledge of God's will, of morality and religion, therefore, is only to be got at by studying the documents which contain a record of their words and works; for the word of God has become the letter of Scripture. We can know nothing of God, religion, or morals at first hand. God was but transiently present in a small number of the race, and has now left it altogether.

This theory forgets that a verbal revelation can never communicate a simple idea, like that of God, justice, love, religion, more than a word can give a deaf man an

idea of sound. It makes inspiration a very rare miracle, confined to one nation, and to some scores of men in that nation, who stand between us and God. We cannot pray in our own name, but in that of the mediator, who hears the prayer, and makes intercession for us. It exalts certain miraculous persons, but degrades man. In prophets and saints, in Moses and Jesus, it does not see the possibility of the race made real, but only the miraculous work of God. Our duty is not to inquire into the truth of their word. Reason is no judge of that. We must put faith in all which all of them tell us, though they contradict each other never so often. Thus it makes an antithesis between faith and knowledge, reason and revelation. It denies that common men, in the nineteenth century, can get at truth and God, as Paul and John in the first century. It sacrifices reason, conscience, and love to the words of the miraculous men, and thus makes its mediator a tyrant, who rules over the soul by external authority, restricting reason, conscience, and love, — not a brother, who acts in the soul, by waking its dormant powers, disclosing truth, and leading others by a divine life to God, the source of light. It says the words of Jesus are true because he spoke them, — not that he spoke them because true. It relies entirely on past times; does not give us the absolute religion, as it exists in man's nature and the ideas of the Almighty, only an historical mode of worship, as lived out here or there. It says the canon of revelation is closed; God will no longer act on men as heretofore. We have come at the end of the feast; are born in the latter days and dotage of mankind, and can only get light by raking amid the ashes of the past, and blowing its brands now almost extinct. It denies that God is present and active in all spirit as in all space; thus it

denies that he is infinite. In the miraculous documents it gives us an objective standard, "the only infallible rule of religious faith and practice." These mediators are greater than the soul; the Bible the master of reason, conscience, and the religious sentiment. They stand in the place of God.

Men ask of this system: How do you know there is in man nothing but the product of sensation, or miraculous tradition; that he cannot approach God except by miracle; that these mediators received truth miraculously, taught all truth, nothing but the truth; that you have their words pure and unmixed in your scriptures; that God has no further revelation to make? The answer is: We find it convenient to assume all this, and accordingly have banished reason from the premises, for she asked troublesome questions. We condescend to no proof of the facts. You must take our word for that. Thus the main doctrines of the theory rest on assumptions, on no-facts.

This system represents the despair of man groping after God. The religious element acts, but is crippled by a philosophy poor and sensual. Is man nothing but a combination of five senses, and a thinking machine to grind up and bolter sensations, and learn of God only by hearsay? The God of supernaturalism is a God afar off; its religion worn out and second-hand. We cannot meet God face to face. In one respect it is worse than naturalism; that sets great value on the faculties of man, which this depreciates and profanes. But all systems rest on a truth, or they could not be; this on a great truth, or it could not prevail widely. It admits a qualified immanence of God in nature, and declares, also, that mankind is dependent on him for religious and moral truth as for all things else,—has a connection with

God, who really guides, educates, and blesses the race, for he is transiently present therein. The doctrine of miraculous events, births, persons, deaths, and the like, this is the veil of poetry drawn over the face of fact. It has a truth not admitted by naturalism. As only a few "*thinking*" men even in fancy can be satisfied without a connection with God, so naturalism is always confined to a few reflective and cultivated persons; while the mass of men believe in the supernatural theory, at least, in the truth it covers up. Its truth is of great moment. Its vice is to make God transiently active in man, not immanent in him, — restrict the divine presence and action to times, places, and persons. It overlooks the fact that if religious truth be necessary for all, then it must either have been provided for and put in the reach of all, or else there is a fault in the divine plan. Then again, if God gives a natural supply for the lower wants, it is probable, to say the least, he will not neglect the higher. Now, for the religious consciousness of man a knowledge of two great truths is indispensable: namely, a knowledge of the existence of the infinite God, and of the duty we owe to him; for a knowledge of these two is implied in all religious teaching and life. Now one of two things must be admitted, and a third is not possible: either man can discover these two things by the light of nature, or he cannot. If the latter be the case, then is he the most hopeless of all beings. Revelation of these truths is confined to a few; it is indispensably necessary to all. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is generally admitted by the supernaturalists in New England, though in spite of their philosophy, — that these two things can be discovered by the light of nature. Then if the two main points, the premises which involve the whole of morals and religion, lie

within the reach of man's natural powers, how is a miracle, or the tradition of a miracle, necessary to reveal the minor doctrines involved in the universal truth? Does not the faculty to discern the greater include the faculty to discern the less? What covers an acre will cover a yard. Where, then, is the use of the miraculous interposition?

Neither naturalism nor supernaturalism legitimates the fact of man's religious consciousness. Both fail of satisfying the natural religious wants of the race. Each has merits and vices of its own. Neither gives for the soul's wants a supply analogous to that so bountifully provided for the wants of the body or the mind.

Spiritualism teaches that there is a natural supply for spiritual as well as for corporeal wants; that there is a connection between God and the soul, as between light and the eye, sound and the ear, food and the palate, truth and the intellect, beauty and the imagination; that as we follow an instinctive tendency, obey the body's law, get a natural supply for its wants, attain health and strength, the body's welfare; as we keep the law of the mind, and get a supply for its wants, attain wisdom and skill, the mind's welfare, — so if, following another instinctive tendency, we keep the law of the moral and religious faculties, we get a supply for their wants, moral and religious truth, obtain peace of conscience and rest for the soul, the highest moral and religious welfare. It teaches that the world is not nearer to our bodies than God to the soul; "for in him we live and move, and have our being." As we have bodily senses to lay hold on matter and supply bodily wants, through which we obtain naturally all needed material things, so we have spiritual faculties to lay hold on God, and supply spiritual wants; through them we obtain all needed spiritual

things. As we observe the conditions of the body, we have nature on our side; as we observe the law of the soul, we have God on our side. He imparts truth to all men who observe these conditions; we have direct access to Him, through reason, conscience, and the religious faculty, just as we have direct access to nature, through the eye, the ear, or the hand. Through these channels, and by means of a law, certain, regular, and universal as gravitation, God inspires men, makes revelation of truth; for is not truth as much a phenomenon of God as motion of matter? Therefore, if God be omnipresent and omniactive, this inspiration is no miracle, but a regular mode of God's action on conscious spirit, as gravitation on unconscious matter. It is not a rare condescension of God, but a universal uplifting of man. To obtain a knowledge of duty, a man is not sent away outside of himself to ancient documents for the only rule of faith and practice; the word is very nigh him, even in his heart, and by this word he is to try all documents whatever. Inspiration, like God's omnipresence, is not limited to the few writers claimed by the Jews, Christians, or Mahometans, but is co-extensive with the race. As God fills all space, so all spirit; as he influences and constrains unconscious and necessitated matter, so he inspires and helps free and conscious man.

This theory does not make God limited, partial, or capricious. It exalts man. While it honors the excellence of a religious genius,— of a Moses or a Jesus,— it does not pronounce their character monstrous, as the supernatural, nor fanatical, as the rationalistic theory; but natural, human, and beautiful, revealing the possibility of mankind. Prayer—whether voluntative or spontaneous, a word or a feeling, felt in gratitude or penitence or joy or resignation — is not a soliloquy of the man, not

a physiological function, nor an address to a deceased man, but a sally into the infinite spiritual world, whence we bring back light and truth. There are windows towards God, as towards the world. There is no intercessor, angel, mediator between man and God; for man can speak and God hear, each for himself. He requires no advocate to plead for men, who need not pray by attorney. Each man stands close to the omnipresent God; may feel his beautiful presence, and have familiar access to the All-Father, — get truth at first hand from its Author. Wisdom, righteousness, and love are the spirit of God in the soul of man; wherever these are, and just in proportion to their power, there is inspiration from God. Thus God is not the author of confusion, but concord; faith, and knowledge, and revelation, and reason tell the same tale, and so legitimate and confirm one another.

God's action on matter and on man is perhaps the same thing to him, though it appear differently modified to us. But it is plain from the nature of things that there can be but one kind of inspiration, as of truth, faith, or love; it is the direct and intuitive perception of some truth either of thought or of sentiment. There can be but one mode of inspiration; it is the action of the Highest within the soul, — the divine presence imparting light; this presence as truth, justice, holiness, love, infusing itself into the soul, giving it new life; the breathing in of the Deity, the in-come of God to the soul, in the form of truth through the reason, of right through the conscience, of love and faith through the affections and religious element. Is inspiration confined to theological matters alone? Most surely not. Is Newton less inspired than Simon Peter?

Now, if the above views be true, there seems no

ground for supposing, without historical proof, there are different kinds or modes of inspiration in different persons, nations, or ages, — in Minos or Moses, in Gentiles or Jews, in the first century or the last. If God be infinitely perfect, he does not change; then his modes of action are perfect and unchangeable. The laws of mind, like those of matter, remain immutable and not transcended. As God has left no age nor man destitute by nature, of reason, conscience, affection, soul, so he leaves none destitute of inspiration. It is, therefore, the light of all our being; the background of all human faculties; the sole means by which we gain a knowledge of what is not seen and felt; the logical condition of all sensual knowledge; our highway to the world of spirit. Man cannot, more than matter, exist without God. Inspiration, then, like vision, must be everywhere the same thing in kind, however it differs in degree, from race to race, from man to man. The degree of inspiration must depend on two things, — first, on the natural ability, the particular intellectual, moral, and religious endowment or genius wherewith each man is furnished by God; and next, on the use each man makes of this endowment. In one word, it depends on the man's quantity of being and his quantity of obedience. Now, as men differ widely in their natural endowments, and much more widely in the use and development thereof, there must of course be various degrees of inspiration, from the lowest sinner up to the highest saint. All men are not by birth capable of the same degree of inspiration; and by culture and acquired character they are still less capable of it. A man of noble intellect, of deep, rich, benevolent affections, is by his endowments capable of more than one less gifted. He that perfectly keeps the soul's law, thus fulfilling the conditions of inspiration,

has more than he who keeps it imperfectly: the former must receive all his soul can contain at that stage of his growth. Thus it depends on a man's own will in great measure, to what extent he will be inspired. The man of humble gifts, at first, by faithful obedience may attain a greater degree than one of larger outfit who neglects his talent. The Apostles of the New Testament, and the true saints of all countries, are proofs of this. Inspiration, then, is the consequence of a faithful use of our faculties. Each man is its subject, God its source, truth its only test. But as truth appears in various modes to us, higher and lower, and may be superficially divided, according to our faculties, into truths of the senses, of the understanding, of reason, of conscience, of the affections and the soul, — so the perception of truth in the highest mode, that of reason, morals, philanthropy, religion, is the highest inspiration. He, then, that has the most of wisdom, goodness, religion, — the most of truth in the highest modes, — is the most inspired.

Now, universal, infallible inspiration can of course only be the attendant and result of a perfect fulfilment of all the laws of mind, of the moral, affectional, and religious nature; and as each man's faculties are limited, it is not possible to men. A foolish man, as such, cannot be inspired to reveal wisdom, nor a wicked man to reveal virtue, nor an impious man to reveal religion. Unto him that hath more is given. The poet reveals poetry, the artist art, the philosopher science, the saint religion. The greater, purer, loftier, more complete the character, so is the inspiration; for he that is true to conscience, faithful to reason, obedient to religion, has not only the strength of his own virtue, wisdom, and piety, but the whole strength of Omnipotence on his side; for goodness, truth, and love, as we conceive them,

are not one thing in man and another in God, but the same thing in each. Thus man partakes the divine nature, as the Platonists, Christians, and Mystics call it. By these means the soul of all flows into the man; what is private, personal, peculiar, ebbs off before that mighty influx from on high. What is universal, absolute, true, speaks out of his lips,—in rude, homely utterance, it may be, or in words that burn and sparkle like the lightning's fiery flash.

This inspiration reveals itself in various forms, modified by the country, character, education, peculiarity of him who receives it, just as water takes the form and the color of the cup into which it flows, and must needs mingle with the impurities it chances to meet. Thus Minos and Moses were inspired to make laws; David to pour out his soul in pious strains, deep and sweet as an angel's psaltery; Pindar to celebrate virtuous deeds in high, heroic song; John the Baptist to denounce sin; Gerson, and Luther, and Böhme, and Fénelon, and Fox, to do each his peculiar work, and stir the world's heart deep, very deep. Plato and Newton, Milton and Isaiah, Leibnitz and Paul, Mozart, Raphael, Phidias, Praxiteles, Orpheus, receive into their various forms the one spirit from God most high. It appears in action not less than speech. The Spirit inspires Dorcas to make coats and garments for the poor, no less than Paul to preach the gospel. As that bold man himself has said, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all."[1] In one man it may appear in the iron hardness of reasoning, which breaks through sophistry and prejudice, the rubbish and diluvial drift of time. In another it is subdued and softened by the flame of affection; the hard

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4, *et seq.*

iron of the man is melted, and becomes a stream of persuasion, sparkling as it runs.

Inspiration does not destroy the man's freedom; that is left fetterless by obedience. It does not reduce all to one uniform standard; but Habakkuk speaks in his own way, and Hugh de St. Victor in his. The man can obey or not obey, can quench the spirit or feed it, as he will. Thus Jonah flees from his duty; Calchas will not tell the truth till out of danger; Peter dissembles and lies. Each of these men had schemes of his own, which he would carry out, God willing or not willing. But when the sincere man receives the truth of God into his soul, knowing it is God's truth, then it takes such a hold of him as nothing else can do. It makes the weak strong, the timid brave; men of slow tongue become full of power and persuasion. There is a new soul in the man, which takes him as it were by the hair of his head, and sets him down where the idea he wishes for demands. It takes the man away from the hall of comfort, the society of his friends,—makes him austere and lonely; cruel to himself, if need be; sleepless in his vigilance, unfaltering in his toil; never resting from his work. It takes the rose out of the cheek, turns the man in on himself, and gives him more of truth. Then, in a poetic fancy, the man sees visions, has wondrous revelations; every mountain thunders; God burns in every bush, flames out in the crimson cloud, speaks in the wind, descends with every dove, is All-in-all. The soul, deep-wrought in its intense struggle, gives outness to its thought; and on the trees and stars, the fields, the floods, the corn ripe for the sickle, on men and women, it sees its burden writ. The spirit within constrains the man. It is like wine that hath no vent. He is full of the God. While he muses the fire burns; his

bosom will scarce hold his heart. He must speak or he dies, though the earth quake at his word.[1] Timid flesh may resist, and Moses say, "I am of slow speech." What avails that? The soul says, "Go, and I will be with thy mouth, to quicken thy tardy tongue." Shrinking Jeremiah, effeminate and timid, recoils before the fearful work. "The flesh will quiver when the pincers tear." He says, "I cannot speak; I am a child." But the great Soul of All flows into him, and says, "Say not 'I am a child,' for I am with thee. Gird up thy loins like a man, and speak all that I command thee. Be not afraid at men's faces, for I will make thee a defenced city, a column of steel and walls of brass. Speak, then, against the whole land of sinners, against the kings thereof, the princes thereof, its people, and its priests. They may fight against thee, but they shall not prevail; for I am with thee." Devils tempt the man with the terror of defeat and want, with the hopes of selfish ambition. It avails nothing; a "Get thee behind me, Satan," brings angels to help. Then are the man's lips touched with a live coal from the altar of truth, brought by a seraph's hand. He is baptized with the spirit of fire. His countenance is like lightning. The truth thunders from his tongue, — his words eloquent as persuasion. No terror is terrible, no fear formidable. The peaceful is satisfied to be a man of strife and contention, — his hand against every man, to root up, and pluck down, and destroy; to build with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. He came to bring peace, but he must set a fire; and his soul is straitened till his work be done. Elisha must leave his oxen in the furrow; Amos desert his summer fruit and his friend; and Böhme, and Bunyan, and Fox, and a thousand others, —

[1] See Lucan ix. 564, *et seq.*

stout-hearted and God-inspired, — must go forth of their errand, into the faithless world, to accept the prophet's mission, be stoned, hated, scourged, slain. Resistance is nothing to these men. Over them steel loses its power, and public opprobrium its shame; deadly things do not harm them. They count loss gain, shame glory, death triumph. These are the men who move the world. They have an eye to see its follies, a heart to weep and bleed for its sin. Filled with a soul wide as yesterday, to-day, and for ever, they pray great prayers for sinful man; the wild wail of a brother's heart runs through the saddening music of their speech. The destiny of these men is forecast in their birth. They are doomed to fall on evil times and evil tongues, come when they will come. The priest and the Levite war with the prophet and do him to death. They brand his name with infamy, cast his unburied bones into the Gehenna of popular shame. John the Baptist must leave his head in a charger; Socrates die the death; Jesus be nailed to his cross; and Justin, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and millions of hearts stout as these, and as full of God, must mix their last prayers, their admonition, and farewell blessing, with the crackling snap of faggots, the hiss of quivering flesh, the impotent tears of wife and child, and the mad roar of the exulting crowd. Every path where mortal feet now tread secure has been beaten out of the hard flint by prophets and holy men, who went before us, with bare and bleeding feet, to smooth the way for our reluctant tread. It is the blood of prophets that softens the Alpine rock. Their bones are scattered in all the high places of mankind. But God lays his burdens on no vulgar men. He never leaves their souls a prey. He paints Elysium on their dungeon wall. In the populous chamber of

their heart the light of faith shines bright, and never dies. For such as are on the side of God there is no cause to fear.

The influence of God in nature, in its mechanical, vital, or instinctive action, is beautiful. The shapely trees; the leaves that clothe them in loveliness; the corn and the cattle; the dew and the flowers; the bird, the insect, moss and stone, fire and water, and earth and air; the clear blue sky that folds the world in its soft embrace; the light which rides on swift pinions, enchanting all it touches, reposing harmless on an infant's eyelid, after its long passage from the other side of the universe, — all these are noble and beautiful; they admonish while they delight us, these silent counsellors and sovereign aids. But the inspiration of God in man, when faithfully obeyed, is nobler and far more beautiful. It is not the passive elegance of unconscious things which we see resulting from man's voluntary obedience. That might well charm us in Nature; in man we look for more. Here the beauty is intellectual, the beauty of thought, which comprehends the world and understands its laws; it is moral, the beauty of virtue, which overcomes the world and lives by its own laws; it is religious and affectional, the beauty of holiness and love, which rises above the world and lives by the law of the Spirit of Life. A single good man, at one with God, makes the morning and evening sun seem little and very low. It is a higher mode of the divine power that appears in him, self-conscious and self-restrained.

Now this it seems is the only kind of inspiration which is possible. It is coextensive with the faithful use of man's natural powers. Men may call it miraculous, but nothing is more natural; or they may say it is entirely human, for it is the result of man's use of his faculties;

but what is more divine than wisdom, justice, benevolence, piety? Are not these the points in which man and God conjoin? If He is present and active in spirit, such must be the perfect result of the action. No doubt there is a mystery in it, as in sensation, in all the functions of man. But what then? As a good man has said, "God worketh with us both to will and to do." Mind, conscience, the affections, and the soul mediate between us and God, as the senses between us and matter. Is one more surprising than the other? Is the one to be condemned as spiritual mysticism or pantheism? Then so is the other as material mysticism or pantheism. Alas, we know but in part; our knowledge is circumscribed by our ignorance.

Now, it is the belief of all primitive nations that God inspires the wise, the good, the holy; yes, that he works with man in every noble work. No doubt their poor conceptions of God degraded the doctrine, and ascribed to the Deity what came from their disobedience of his law.

The wisest and holiest men have spoken in the name of God. Minos, Moses, Zoroaster, Confucius, Zaleucus, Numa, Mahomet, profess to have received their doctrine straightway from Him. The sacred persons of all nations, from the Druid to the Pope, refer back to his direct inspiration. From this source the Sibylline oracles, the responses at Delphi, the sacred books of all nations, the Vedas and the Bible, alike claim to proceed. Pagans tell us no man was ever great without a divine afflatus falling upon him. Much falsity was mingled with the true doctrine, for that was imperfectly understood, and violence and folly and lies were thus ascribed to God. Still, the popular belief shows that the human mind turns naturally in this direction. Each prophet, false

or true, in Palestine, Nubia, India, Greece, spoke in the name of God. In this name the apostles of Christ and of Mahomet, the Catholic and the Protestant, went to their work. A good man feels that justice, goodness, truth, are immutable, not dependent on himself; that certain convictions come by a law over which he has no control. There they stand; he cannot alter, though he may refuse to obey them. Some have considered themselves bare tools in the hand of God; they did and said they knew not what, thus charging their follies and sins on God most high. Others, going to a greater degree of insanity, have confounded God with themselves, declaring that they were God. But even if likeness were perfect, it is not identity. Yet a ray from the primal light falls on man. No doubt there have been men of a high degree of inspiration in all countries, — the founders of the various religions of the world. But they have been limited in their gifts and their use of them. The doctrine they taught had somewhat national, temporal, even personal, in it, and so was not the absolute religion. No man is so great as human nature, nor can one finite being feed forever all his brethren. So their doctrines were limited in extent and duration.

Now this inspiration is limited to no sect, age, or nation. It is wide as the world, and common as God. It is not given to a few men, in the infancy of mankind, to monopolize inspiration and bar God out of the soul. You and I are not born in the dotage and decay of the world. The stars are beautiful as in their prime; "the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong;" the bird merry as ever at its clear heart. God is still everywhere in nature, at the line, the pole, in a mountain or a moss. Wherever a heart beats with love, where faith and reason utter their oracles, there also is God, as formerly in

the heart of seers and prophets. Neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem, nor the soil that Jesus blessed, so holy as the good man's heart; nothing so full of God. This inspiration is not given to the learned alone, not to the great and wise, but to every faithful child of God. The world is close to the body; God closer to the soul, not only without but within, for the all-pervading current flows into each. The clear sky bends over each man, little or great; let him uncover his head, there is nothing between him and infinite space. So the ocean of God encircles all men; uncover the soul of its sensuality, selfishness, sin, there is nothing between it and God, who flows into the man as light into the air. Certainly as the open eye drinks in the light, do the pure in heart see God; and he that lives truly feels him as a presence not to be put by.

But this is a doctrine of experience as much as of abstract reasoning. Every man who has ever prayed — prayed with the mind, prayed with the heart greatly and strong, knows the truth of this doctrine, welcomed by pious souls. There are hours — and they come to all men — when the hand of destiny seems heavy upon us; when the thought of time misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or ill-requited, the experience of man's worse nature and the sense of our own degradation, come over us. In the outward and inward trials we know not which way to turn. The heart faints and is ready to perish. Then in the deep silence of the soul, when the man turns inward to God, light, comfort, peace dawn on him. His troubles — they are but a dew-drop on his sandal. His enmities or jealousies, hopes, fears, honors, disgraces, all the undeserved mishaps of life, are lost to the view, — diminished, and then hid in the mists of the valley he has left behind and below him. Resolution

comes over him with its vigorous wing; truth is clear as noon; the soul in faith rushes to its God. The mystery is at an end.

It is no vulgar superstition to say men are inspired in such times. They are the seed-time of life. Then we live whole years through in a few moments, and afterwards, as we journey on in life, cold and dusty and travel-worn and faint, we look to that moment as a point of light; the remembrance of it comes over us like the music of our home heard in a distant land. Like Elisha in the fable, we go long years in the strength thereof. It travels with us, a great wakening light, — a pillar of fire in the darkness, to guide us through the lonely pilgrimage of life. These hours of inspiration, like the flower of the aloe-tree, may be rare, but are yet the celestial blossoming of man, — the result of the past, the prophecy of the future. They are not numerous to any man. Happy is he that has ten such in a year, yes, in a lifetime.

Now, to many men who have but once felt this, — when heaven lay about them in their infancy, before the world was too much with them, and they laid waste their powers, getting and spending, — when they look back upon it, across the dreary gulf, where honor, virtue, religion, have made shipwreck and perished with their youth, it seems visionary, a shadow, dream-like, unreal. They count it a phantom of their inexperience, — the vision of a child's fancy, raw and unused to the world. Now they are wiser. They cease to believe in inspiration. They can only credit the saying of the priests, that long ago there were inspired men; but none now; that you and I must bow our faces to the dust, groping like the blind-worm and the beetle; not turn our eyes to the broad, free heaven; that we cannot walk by the great

central and celestial light which God made to guide all who come into the world, but only by the farthing-candle of tradition, — poor and flickering light which we get of the priest, which casts strange and fearful shadows around us as we walk, that "leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind." Alas for us if this be all!

But can it be so? Has infinity laid aside its omnipresence, retreating to some little corner of space? No. The grass grows as green; the birds chirp as gaily; the sun shines as warm; the moon and the stars walk in their pure beauty, sublime as before; morning and evening have lost none of their loveliness; not a jewel has fallen from the diadem of night. God is still there; ever present in matter, else it were not; else the serpent of fate would coil him about the All of things; would crush it in his remorseless grasp, and the hour of ruin strike creation's knell.

Can it be, then, as so many tell us, that God, transcending time and space, immanent in matter, has forsaken man; retreated from the Shekinah in the Holy of Holies to the court of the Gentiles; that now he will stretch forth no aid, but leave his tottering child to wander on, amid the palpable obscure, eyeless and fatherless, without a path, with no guide but his feeble brother's words and works; groping after God if haply he may find him, and learning at last that he is but a God afar off, to be approached only by mediators and attorneys, not face to face as before? Can it be that thought shall fly through the heaven, his pinion glittering in the ray of every star, burnished by a million suns, and then come drooping back, with ruffled plume and flagging wing, and eye which once looked undazzled on the sun, now spiritless and cold — come back to tell us God is no Father; that he veils his face and will not look upon

his child, his erring child? No more can this be true. Conscience is still God-with-us; a prayer is deep as ever of old, reason as true, religion as blest. Faith still remains the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Love is yet mighty to cast out fear. The soul still searches the deeps of God; the pure in heart see him. The substance of the infinite is not yet exhausted, nor the well of life drunk dry. The Father is near us as ever, else reason were a traitor, morality a hollow form, religion a mockery, and love a hideous lie. Now, as in the days of Adam, Moses, Jesus, he that is faithful to reason, conscience, heart, and soul, will through them receive inspiration to guide him through all his pilgrimage.

SPECULATIVE ATHEISM, REGARDED AS A THEORY OF THE UNIVERSE.

The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. — Psalm xiv. 1.

THE idea which a man forms of God is always the most important element in his speculative theory of the universe, and in his particular, practical plan of action for the church, the state, the community, the family, and his own individual life. You see to-day the vast influence of the popular idea of God. All the great historical civilizations of the race have grown out of the national idea which was formed of God, or have been intimately connected with it. The popular theology, which at first is only an abstract idea in the heads of the philosophers, by-and-by shows itself in the laws, the navies, the forts, and the jails; in the churches, the ceremonies, and the sacraments, the weddings, the baptisms, and the funerals; in the hospitals, the colleges, the schools; in all the social charities; in the relation of husband and wife, parent and child; in the daily work and the daily prayer of each man. Thus, what at first is the abstractest of thoughts, by-and-by becomes the concretest of things. If a man concludes there is no God at all, that conclusion, negative though it is, will have an immense influence, — subjectively, on his feelings and opinions; objectively, on his outward conduct; subjectively, as the theory of the universe; objectively, as the principle of practical life.

Speculative theism is the belief in the existence of God in one form or another; and I call him a theist who believes in any God. By atheism I mean absolute denial of the existence of any God. A man may deny actuality to the Hebrew idea of God, to the Christian idea of God, or to the Mahometan idea of God, and yet be no atheist.

The Hebrews formed a certain conception of a being with many good qualities and some extraordinary bad qualities, and called it Jehovah, and said, "That is God; it is the only God." The majority of Christians form a certain conception of a being with more good qualities than are ascribed to Jehovah, but with some most atrociously evil qualities, and call it Trinity, or Unity, and say, "That is God; the only God."

Now, a man may deny the actuality of either or both these ideas of God, and yet be no atheist. He may do so because he is more of a theist than the majority of Hebrews or Christians; because he has a higher development of the religious faculty, and has thereby obtained a better idea of God. Thus the Old Testament prophets, with a religious development often far in advance of their Gentile neighbors, declared that Baal was no God. Of course, the worshippers of Baal called the Hebrew prophets atheists, for they denied all the God these Gentiles knew. Paul, in the New Testament, more of a theist than the Greeks and Asiatics about him, with a larger religious development than they dreamed of, said, "An idol is nothing." That is, there is no being which corresponds exactly to the qualities ascribed to an idol. Their idea of God, said Paul, lacked actuality; it was a personal or national whimsey; not a perfect subjective representation of the objective fact of the universe, but only a mistaken idea about that fact.

If a man has outgrown the Hebrew, or common Christian idea of God, he may say what Paul said of the idol, "It is nothing." He will not be an atheist, but a theist all the more. The superior conception of God always nullifies the inferior conception.

Thus, as the world grows in its development, it necessarily outgrows its ancient ideas of God, which were only temporary and provisional. As it goes forward, the ancient deities are looked on first as devils; next, as a mere mistaken notion which some men had formed about God. For example, a hundred years ago it was the custom of the learned men of the Christian Church to speak of the heathen deities — Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, and the rest — as devils. They did not deny the actual existence of those beings, only affirmed them to be not gods, but devils or "fallen angels;" at any rate, evil beings. Some of the heretics among the early Christians said the same of the Hebrew Jehovah, — that he was not the true God, but only a devil who misled the Jews. Now-a-days well-educated men who still use the terms say that Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, and the others were only mistaken notions which men formed of God. They deny the actuality of the idea; "Jupiter is nothing." A man who has a higher conception of God than those about him, who denies their conception, is often called an atheist by men who are less theistic than he. Thus the Christians, who said the heathen idols were no gods, were accounted atheists by the people, and accordingly put to death. Thus Jesus of Nazareth was accused of blasphemy and crucified by men who had not a tithe of the religious development and reverence for God which he possessed. The men who centuries ago denied the actuality of the Trinity were put to death as atheists, — Servetus among the rest, John Calvin himself tending the flames.

At this day the devil is a part of the popular Godhead in the common theology, representing the malignant element which still belongs to the ecclesiastical conception of Deity. If a man says there is no devil, he is thought to be, if not an atheist, at least very closely related to an atheist. He denies a portion of the popular Godhead; is constructively an atheist, — an atheist as far as he goes; atheistic in kind, as much as if he denied the whole Godhead, when he would obviously be branded an atheist.

I use the word atheism in quite a different sense. It is the absolute denial of any and all forms of God; the denial of the *genus*, the denial of all possible ideas of God, highest as well as lowest.

At this day there are some philosophers, quite eminent men too, who call themselves atheists, and in set terms deny the actuality of any possible idea of God. They say the idea of God is a whimsey of men, and God is not a fact of the universe. Man has a notion of God, as of a ghost or devil; but it is a pure whimsey, — something which he has spun out of his own brain, and there is nothing in the universe to correspond thereto. Man has an idea of God, but the universe has no fact of God.

These men do not mean to scoff at others. They teach their doctrines with the calmness and precision of philosophy, and affirm atheism as their theory of the universe. It is a conclusion they have deliberately arrived at. They are not ashamed of it; they do not conceal it; do not ostentatiously set it forth.

I am doing these men no injustice in giving them this name, because they claim the style and title of atheists, and professedly teach atheism. They are not always bigoted atheists, but philosophical. A few of them are in this country, founding schools and sects of their way

of thinking. Some of them are men of quite superior ability, men of very large intellectual culture. They seem to be truth-loving and sincere persons; conscientious, just, humane, philanthropic, and modest men. They are men who aim to be faithful to their nature, and to their whole nature. I am acquainted with some of them; they are commonly on the side of man, as opposed to the enemies of man; on the side of the people, as against a tyrant: they are, or mean to be, on the side of truth, of justice, and of love. I shall not throw stones at these men; I shall devise no hard names against them; they will get abuse enough without my giving them any at all. I feel great tenderness towards them, and very great compassion, — which I suppose they would not thank me for. Some of them I know personally; others by their reputation; some by their writings. I think they are much higher in their moral and religious growth than a great many men who are always saying to God, "I go, sir," and yet never stir. These are men who have made sacrifices even, to be faithful; and without knowing it they have a good deal of practical religiousness of character, both in its subjective form of piety, and in its objective form of personal and social morality.

I do not believe that such men are real atheists, though they think themselves so; and I only call them so to distinguish their doctrines, and because they themselves like the name. I think the philosophical atheist lacks actuality as much as the idea of the devil, or a ghost.

The Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." If the fool says so, I shall believe the fool thinks so; and if the fool holds up his five fingers and says he has no hand, I shall believe the fool

thinks so. But when a philosopher says there is no God, I do not believe he thinks so, only that he thinks he thinks so. A man may sometimes think he sees a thing when he does not see it; and so a man may think he thinks a thing when he does not think it. A philosophical and consistent atheist is as much an impossibility, I think, as a mathematician who cannot count two; or as a round square, or a three-cornered circle. I shall never believe that a sane man who can understand the multiplication-table is an atheist, though he may call himself so, and claim atheism as his theory of the universe. But inasmuch as this is set up as a theory of the universe, let us look at it, and see what real speculative atheism is. That is the first thing.

There is a mere formal atheism, which is a denial of God in terms. A man says, There is no God; no God that is self-originated, who is the cause of existence, who is the mind and the providence of the universe: and so the order, beauty, and harmony of the world of matter or mind does not indicate any plan or purpose of Deity. But, he says, nature, — meaning by that the whole sum total of existence, — that is powerful, wise, and good; nature is self-originated, the cause of its own existence, the mind of the universe, and the providence thereof. There is obviously a plan and purpose, says he, whereby order, beauty, and harmony are brought to pass; but all that is the plan and purpose of nature.

Very well. In such cases the absolute denial of God is only formal, but not real. The quality of God is still admitted, and affirmed to be real; only the representative of that quality is called nature, and not called God. That is only a change of name. The question is this, — "Are there such qualities in existence as we call God?" It is not, — "How shall we name the qualities?" One

man may call the sum total of these qualities Nature, another Heaven, a third Universe, a fourth Matter, a fifth Spirit, a sixth Geist, a seventh God, an eighth Theos, a ninth Allah, or what he pleases. Spinoza may call God *Natura naturans*, and the rest of the universe *Natura naturata*; Berosus may call God El, and the rest of the universe Thebal. They all admit the existence of the thing so diversely named. The name is of the smallest consequence. All these men that I know, who call themselves atheists, really admit the actual existence of the qualities I speak of.

Real atheism is a denial of the existence of any God, — a denial of the *genus* God, of the actuality of all possible ideas of God. It denies that there is any mind or being which is the cause and providence of the universe, and which intentionally produces the order, beauty, and harmony thereof, with the constant modes of operation therein. To be consistent it ought to go a step further, and deny that there is any law, order, or harmony in existence, or any constant modes of operation in the world. The real speculative atheist denies the existence of the qualities of God; denies that there is any mind of the universe, any self-conscious providence, any providence at all. If he follows out his principle he must deny the actuality of the Infinite, deny that there is any being or cause of finite things which is self-consciously powerful, wise, just, loving, and self-faithful. To him there are only finite things, — each self-originated, self-sustained, self-directed, — and no more; the universe, comprising the world of matter, and the world of mind, is a finite whole, made up of finite parts; each part is imperfect, the whole incomplete; the finite has no Infinite to depend on as its ground and cause; there is no plan in the universe or any part thereof.

Now see the subjective effect of this theory. By subjective, I mean the effect it produces on the sentiments and opinions within me.

I. Look at it first as a theory of the world of matter.

In respect to the origin of matter, both theists and atheists labor under the same difficulty. Neither atheist nor theist knows anything about that. I know men, chiefly theologians, pretend to understand all about the creation of matter originally; and to hear them talk you would suppose it was as easy to comprehend how God made a world out of nothing as it is to understand how a tailor makes a coat out of broadcloth or velvet. But if a man looks with a philosophical eye, he sees that this creation of matter is an extraordinarily difficult thing. The philosophical theist admits the existence of the universe, and the atheist does so; but in the present state of our knowledge neither atheist nor theist knows the mode of origination. You may go back a good ways and study the origin of an egg, a fish, seed, tree, or rock, or the solar system, after the fashion of Laplace; but the manner of originating matter, out of which the egg, fish, seed, tree, rock, and solar system are made, is just as far off as ever; and it seems to be beyond the reach of the faculties of man: I will not say that it is so; only, in the present stage of man's development and scientific acquirements, it seems so. The origin of body — of any specific form of matter — may be made out, but the origin of matter, the primitive, universal substance whereof body is made, still eludes our search. I know that theological theists often call the philosophical atheist very hard names because he denies that he can understand this process at present; the charge is gratuitous.

But the real speculative atheist must declare that matter, the general substance whereof body is made, is eter-

nal, but without thought, or will; and the specific forms of existence — of egg, fish, seed, tree, rock, and solar system — all came with no forethought preceding them; came "by chance," — that is to say, by the "fortuitous concourse of matter," which has no thought or will, — and that they indicate no mind, no plan, no purpose, no providence. That is their theory of the universe; compare it with facts.

See how this scheme works on a great scale in the material world. The solar system has a sun and numerous planets; they are all distributed in a certain ratio of distance; they move round the sun with a certain velocity, always exactly proportionate to their distance from the sun. This holds good with regard to the nearest and the farthest. They move in paths of the same form; they are ruled by the same laws of motion; they receive and emit light in the same way. These laws, which are the constant modes of planetary operation, when we come to study them, are found to be exceedingly intricate; yet they are uniform, and the same for one planet as for another; the same for a satellite as for a planet. They are perfectly kept, and so uniform in action that if you go back to the time of Thales, five hundred years before Christ, you can calculate the eclipse of the moon, and find that it took place exactly as the historians of that day relate; or you may go forward five days, or five years, or five thousand years, and calculate with the same precision. So accurate are these laws that an astronomer studying the perturbations of a remote planet, the phenomena of its economy not accounted for by the attraction of bodies known to be in existence, conjectures the existence of some other planet which causes the phenomena not accounted for. Nay, by mathematical science he determines its place and

size, — inferring the fact of a new planet outside of the uttermost ring of the solar system; at a certain minute he turns his telescope to the calculated spot, and, for the first time, the star of Leverrier springs before the eye of conscious man!

Now, the atheist must declare that all this order of the solar system was brought about by the fortuitous concourse of matter, and indicates no mind, plan, or purpose in the universe. This is absurd. A man might as well deny the fact of the law of the solar system, or the existence of the sun, or of himself, as to deny that these facts, thus coördinated, indicate a mind, denote a plan, and serve a purpose calculated beforehand.

See the same thing on a smaller scale. The composition of the air is such that first it helps to light and warm the earth; is a swaddling garment to keep in the specific heat of the earth, and prevent it from radiating off into the cold void spaces of the universe. Next, it helps to cleanse and purify the earth by its free circulation as wind. Then, it promotes vegetation, carries water from the Tropics to the Norwegian pine, furnishes much of the food of plants, their means of life. Next, it helps animal life, is the vehicle of respiration; all plants that grow, all things that breathe, continually suck the breasts of heaven. Again, it is a most important instrument for the service of man; through this we communicate by artificial light and artificial sound. Without it all were dumb and motionless; not a bird could sing or fly, not a cricket creak to his partner at night, not a man utter a word; and a voiceless ocean would ebb and flow upon a silent shore. The thought-mill would be as idle as the wind-mill. Man kindles his fire by the air; it moves his ship, winnows his corn, fans his temples, carries his balloon.

Now, the air is capable of these and a great many other functions in virtue of its peculiar composition, — so much hydrogen, so much oxygen. No other combination of elements could ever have accomplished this. Vary the composition, have a little more hydrogen or oxygen, and you alter its powers as a vehicle of radiation, evaporation, vegetation, purification, respiration, communication, and combustion. The atheist must believe that this composition is not the result of any mind, that it serves no plan and purpose, and came by the fortuitous concourse of matter; no more, — that it is all chance.

If I should say that this sermon came by the fortuitous concourse of matter, that last Monday I shut up pen, ink, and paper in a drawer, and to-day went and found there a sermon, which had come by the fortuitous concourse of pen, ink, and paper, — every man would think I was very absurd. And yet I should not commit so great a quantity of absurdity as if I were to say, "the composition of air came by the fortuitous concourse of atoms;" for it takes a much greater mind to bring together and compose the air which fills a thimble than to produce all the sermons and literature of the world.

If the atheist says there is mind in matter, which arranges the planets, controls their distances, their revolutions, their constant modes of operation, that this mind in matter arranges the elements in the air so as to perform all the functions which I have named, and many more, — then he is false to his atheism, and becomes a theist; for he no longer denies the qualities of God, but only calls them by a different name.

With atheism as the theory of the universe, the world ought to be a jumble of parts, with no contexture; for the moment you admit the existence of order in the very

least form, a constant mode of operation on the very smallest scale, — why, you must admit the existence of the mind which devised the order and the mode of operation; and if you call the mind Geist, or God, or Nature, or Jehovah, it makes small odds; the question is not about the name, but about the fact.

Now the world is nowhere a jumble. Things are not "huddled and lumped together" in the composition of the eyeball of the emmet, or of the solar system. Every part of the universe is an argument against atheism as a theory thereof.

II. Look next at atheism as the theory of individual human life. According to the atheistic scheme there is no conscious power which is the cause of me and of my life, which is the providence thereof; no mind which arranges the world in reference to me, or me in reference to the world. Does that conclusion satisfy the instinctive desires of human nature any better than it accounts for the facts of material nature?

Look at human life from this point of view. I see but little ways behind, around, or before me; and yet, in all directions, my power of knowledge is greater than my power of work. I know little of the consequences which will follow from my action. I invent an alphabet, gunpowder, the printing-press, the steam-engine, a representative form of government, a constitution. I know very little of the effect which these vast forces will produce in the world of man. I know that the steam-engine will turn my mill, that the printing-press will print my newspaper, that gunpowder will explode at the touch of fire; but I do not know the effect which these great forces, newly introduced to the world, are to have on the families, the communities, the churches, the states of mankind, and on the general development of the human race.

The atheist says there is nothing which knows any better, or which knows any more about it; nothing which uses these inventions as forces for the advancement of any purpose. "The universe," says he, "has no self-conscious mind except the mind of man, and he is only 'darkly wise and meanly great.' Nothing in the world," says our atheist, "knows what a day may bring forth. The universe is drifting in the void inane, and knows nothing of its whence, its whither, or its whereabouts. Man is drifting in the universe, and knows little of his whereabouts, nothing of his whence or whither. There is no mind, no providence, no power, which knows any better; nothing which guides and directs man in his drifting, or the universe in the weltering waste of time. Nothing is laid up for to-morrow. My life tends to nothing."

I am joyful; joy is very well, but nothing comes of it. I am sorrowful, and suffer; this is hard, but it is no part of a plan which is to lead to something further. And when my manhood falls away, and my body dissolves, all that is to lead to nothing better. My baby-teeth fall out, giving way to my man-teeth, but that is all chance, and indicates no forethought of a mind which provided for the man before the baby was born!

I serve men, and get their hate and scorn: the Sadducee grumbles because I tell him of his soul and immortality; the Pharisee, because I demand that he devour widows' houses no more, nor for a pretence make long prayers; and both of these hunkers, the hunker Sadducee and the hunker Pharisee, throw stones at me, and put me to death. It all comes to nothing for me; I am a dead body, and not a live man; that is all I get for my virtue.

I am a brave man, and my country needs me to repel the Spanish Armada, or to keep imperial Nicholas, or

Francis, or papal Pius the Ninth, or the little President Napoleon, from kidnapping my liberty. I go out to do battle, and I come home scarred all over with heroism, half my limbs hewed off, aching at every pore, or I die on the spot. I carry no heroism, no manhood with me; I am a heap of dust which other dust will soon cover; but the manhood which once enchanted this dust with valiant life is put out, and quenched for ever, — it is all gone, it is nothing. My brother in that time of peril was a coward; and when war blew the trumpet and his country called on him, he crept under the oven. When all is over, and quiet is restored, he comes out with a whole skin, and over my unburied bones he marches into peace and carousing, and says, "A pretty fool was this man to lay down his life for me, and get nothing for it!" and the atheist says he is right.

The patriot soldier gets his wounds and crutch, the martyr his fagot and flame, Jesus his cup of bitterness and cross of death, — and that is all. Dives has his purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, more heedless than the dogs of the beggar at his gate; Lazarus has his sores and the medical attendance of the hounds in the street; but death ends all.

The mother, whose self-denial leads her to forget everything but her feeble crippled child, has nothing but her affection and watching; she dies, and all is ended. Another mother abandons her sickly, pestilential child, who dies of neglect, and she lives forty years longer in joyous wantonness and riot; and when she dies it is to the same end as the other; only she for her falseness has had forty years of animal joy, and the other mother, for her faithfulness, has had nothing but an instantaneous death. And my atheist says there is no future world to compensate the mother who died for love.

My life is a great disappointment, let me suppose, — and for no fault of mine, but for my excellence, my justice, my philanthropy, for the service I have rendered to mankind. I am poor, and hated, and persecuted. I flee to my atheist for consolation, and I ask, "What does all this come to?" And he says, "It comes to nothing. Your nobleness will do you no good. You will die, and your nobleness will do mankind no service; for there is no plan or order in all these things; every thing comes and goes by the fortuitous concourse of atoms. If you had been a hunker you might have had money, ease, honor, respectability, and a long life, with the approbation of your minister. You had better have been so."

I lay in the ground one dearest to me; some only daughter, — her life but a bud, not a blossom, yet mere bud as it is, the better part of my life. In the agony of my heart I flee to my atheist for comfort; and he cannot give me a drop of water from the tip of his finger, while I am tormented in that unutterable grief. "A worm," says he, "has eaten up your rose-bud. Get what comfort you can. This is the last spring-day, no leaf will be again green for you."

I come myself to die. I have labored to extend my existence, which every man loves to do; and so I reached back and sought to find out who my fathers and grandfathers were, and trace out my pedigree. I wished to extend myself collaterally, and reached forth toward nature, and linked myself with that by science and art, and with man by love. The same desire to extend myself urges me to go forward instinct with immortality, and join myself again to my dear ones, and to mankind, for eternal life. But my atheist stands between me and immortality. "Death is the end," says he. "This is a world without a God; you are a body without a soul;

there is a here without a hereafter; an earth without a Heaven. Die, and return to your dust!

"I am a philosopher," says he. "I have been up to the sky, and there is no heaven. Look through my telescope: that which you see afar off there is a little star in the nebula of Orion's belt; so distant that it will take light a thousand millions of years to come from it to the earth, journeying at the rate of twelve millions of miles a minute. There is no heaven this side of that; you see all the way through; there is not a speck of heaven. And do you think there is any beyond it?

"Talk about your soul! I have been into man with my scalpel in my hand, and my microscope, and there is no soul. Man is bones, blood, bowels, and brain. Mind is matter. Do you doubt this? Here is Arnoldi's perfect map of the brain; there is no soul there, — nothing but nerves.

"Talk of providence! — there is no such thing. I have been through the universe, and there is no God. God is a whim of men; nature is a fortuitous concourse of atoms; man is a fortuitous concourse of atoms; thought is a fortuitous function of matter, a fortuitous result of a fortuitous result, a chance shot from the great wind-gun of the universe, — which itself is also a chance-shot, from a chance-charge of a chance-gun, accidentally loaded, pointed at random, and fired off by chance. Things happen, they are not arranged. There is luck, and ill-luck, but there is no providence. Die into dust! True, you sigh for immortality; you long for the dear arms of father and mother, that went to the ground before you, and for the rose-bud daughter, prematurely nipped. True, you complain of tears that have left a deep and bitter furrow in your cheek; you complain of virtue not rewarded, of nobleness that felt for the In-

finite, of a mighty hungering and thirst for everlasting life, a longing and a yearning after God; all that is nothing. Die, and be still!" Does not that content you? Does this theory square with the facts of consciousness?

III. Now look at atheism as a theory of the life of mankind. Man came by chance; the family by chance; society by chance; nations by chance; the human race by chance. Man is his own sole guide and guardian. No mind ever grouped the faculties together and made a cosmic man, — it was all chance. There is no mind which groups the solitary into families, these into nations, and the nations to a world, — it is all chance. There is no providence for man, except in human heads. Politicians are the only legislators, their statutes the only law; there is no higher law. Kings and presidents are the only rulers; there is no great Father and Mother of all the nations of mankind. There is no mind that thinks for man, no conscience to enact eternal laws, no heart to love me when father and mother forsake me and let me fall, no will of the universe to marshal the nations in the way of wisdom, justice, and love. History is the fortuitous concourse of events, as nature is of atoms; there is no plan nor purpose in it which is to guide our going out and coming in. True, there is a mighty going, but it goes nowhere. True, there has been a progressive development of man's body and mind, and the functions thereof, — a growth of beauty, wisdom, justice, affection, piety; but it is an accident, and may end to-morrow, and the next day there may be a decay of mankind, a decay of beauty, intellect, justice, affection; science, art, literature, civilization may be all forgot, and the naked savage come and burn up Boston, New York, London, and Paris, and drown the last baby of civilization

in the blood of the last mother. You are not sure that any good will come of it; there is no reason to think that any good will come of it. Says atheism, "Everywhere is instability and insecurity."

Look on the aspect of human misery, the outrage, blood, and wrong which the earth groans under. Here is the wife of a drunkard, whose marriage life is a perpetual violation. She married for love a man who once loved her; but the mayor and aldermen of the city insisted that he should be made a beast. A beast, did I say? Ye four-footed and creeping things of the earth, I beg your pardon! Even the swine is sober in his sty. The mayor and aldermen of the city made this man a drunkard; and the poor wife watches over him, cleanses his garments, wipes off the foulness of his debauch, and stitches her life into the garments which some wealthy tailor will sell, — giving her for wages the tenth part of his own profit, — and which some dandy will wear, — thanking the "gods of dandies" that he is not like that poor woman, so ill-clad and industrious. She will stitch her life into the garments, working at starvation wages, and yet will pay the fines to keep the street-drunkard out of the House of Correction, where the city government hides the bodies of the men it slays. She toils till at length the silver cord of life has got loosed, and the golden bowl begins to break. She goes to my atheist, and asks, "What comes of all this? Am I to have any compensation for my suffering?" and the atheist says, "Nothing comes of it; there is no compensation. You are a fool. You had better have got a license from the mayor and aldermen to prey on other men's wives about you; and then you might have had wealth and ease, and respectability. You ought to drink blood and not shed your own.

"Abel's blood cries out of the ground," continues our atheist, "but there is no ear of justice to hear it, and Cain, red with slaughter, goes off welcomed to the arms of the daughters of Nod; the victims of nobleness rot in their blood; booty and beauty are both for him. The world festers with the wounds of the hero, but there is no cure for them; the hero is a fool — his wounds prove it. Saint Catherine has her wheel, Saint Andrew his sword, Saint Sebastian his arrows, Saint Lawrence his fire of green wood; Paul has his fastings, his watchings, his scourge, and his jail, his perils of waters, of robbers, of the city and the wilderness, his perils among false brethren; and Jesus his thorny crown, his malefactor's death; Kossuth gets his hard fate, and Francis the Stupid gets the Hungarian throne; the patriots of France broil in the tropic marshes of Cayenne, and Napoleon, surrounded by cultivated women who make merchandise of their loveliness, and by able men who make merchandise of their intellect, Napoleon the Little fills his own bosom and the throne of France with his debauchery; Europe is dotted with dungeons, — Austrian, Hungarian, German, French, Italian, — they are crowded with the noblest men of the age, who there do perpetual penance for their self-denial, their wisdom, their justice, their affection for mankind, and their fidelity to God. These die as the fool dieth. There is no hope for any one of them, in a body without a soul, in an earth without a heaven, in a world without a God. Does not that content you?

"All the Christian world over, oppression plies its bloody knout, — its well-paid metropolitan priest blessing the scourge before it is laid on. The groan of the poor comes up from the bogs of Ireland, and from the rich farms of England, and her crowded manufactories.

Men make circumstances in London, which degrade two hundred thousand people below the cannibals of New Zealand, and starve the Irish into exile, brutality, or death. The sighing of the prisoner breaks out from the jail of the tormentor, who

> "'Holds the body bound,
> But knows not what a range the spirit takes.'

"The iron gripe of kings chokes the throat of the people. Every empire is girded at the loins with an iron belt of soldiers, which eats into the nation's flesh. Siberia fattens with freedom's noble dead, and in America three millions of men drag out a life in chains, bought as cattle, sold as cattle, counted as cattle, only not prayed for in the Christian churches, as cattle are; and the little commissioners who kidnap at Boston, and the great stealers of men who enact the statutes which make women into things, are honored in all the Christian churches of the land. Most of 'the great men,' all the 'citizens of eminent gravity,' all the 'unimpeachable divines,' are on the side of wrong. Cry out, blood of Abel! there is no ear to hear you. Victims of nobleness, rot in your blood! it will enrich the ground. Ye saints, — Catherine, Andrew, Sebastian, Lawrence, Paul, Jesus, — bear your rack and gibbet as best your bodies may! Kossuth, stoop to Francis the Stupid! Ye patriots of France, kneel to Napoleon the Little, and be jolly in the Sodom which he makes. Ye that groan in the dungeons of the world, who starve in its fertile soils, who wear chains in free America, — yield to the Jeffries, the Haynaus, the slave-hunters, and the priests! for there is a body without a soul, an earth without a heaven, a world without a God. Atheism is the theory of the universe; and there is no God, no cause, no mind, no providence."

The atheist looks on the lives of the noble men

> "Who in the public breach devoted stood,
> And for their country's cause were prodigal of blood,"

and he says, "These men were fools; every man of them might have been as sleek, as comfortable, and as fat as the oiliest priest that Mammon consecrates. They were fools, and only fools, and fools continually. To the individual hero there comes nothing but blood and wounds."

He looks on the nations that failed in their struggle against a tyrant's chain; Poland fell, and Kosciusko went to London, only "Peter Pindar" to welcome the exile; Greece went down in Turkish night; Italy and Spain must bow them to a tyrant's whim, — and the atheist has no hope. The States which fail read no lesson to mankind, and have no return for their unblest toil. He looks on the nations now in their agony and bloody sweat, sitting in darkness and iron; he sees no angel strengthening them. What a picture the world presents! — heroism unrequited, paid with misery; vice on a throne, and nobleness in chains. Want, misery, violence, meet him everywhere; and for his comfort he has his creed, — a body without a soul, an earth without a heaven, a world without a God!

The atheist sends out his intellect to seek for the controlling mind, which is the cause of the created, the reason of the conceivable, the ground of the true, and the loveliness of things beautiful. His intellect comes back, and has brought nothing, has found nothing but the reflection of its own littleness mirrored on the surfaces of things. He saw matter everywhere: he met no causal and providing mind.

He sends out his moral sense to seek the legislating conscience, which is justice in what is right, the ground

of good, and the altogether beautiful to the moral sense, the equitable will which rules the world. But his moral sense returns silent, alone, and empty; there is no equitable will, no altogether beautiful of moral excellence, no ground of good, no conscience which enacts justice into the unchanging law of right: there is only the finite will of man, often erring and always feeble, man an animated and self-conscious drop of dew in the Sahara of the world, conscious of desire, of will, but of such feebleness that soon he will exhale into thin air, and be no more a drop in all the world, — will evaporate into nothing. Everywhere is material fate, material chance: spiritual order, spiritual providence, — that is a dream.

He sends out his affections on the same quest, seeking his heart's desire. They have grown strong by love of nature, — the crystal, the plant, and animal; they have been educated by loving men, — parent and friend, and wife and child, and all mankind; refined by loving, noble men, who attract ingenuous youth as loadstones draw the iron dust. Now his affections fly forth with trembling wing, and seek the all-perfect ideal, the object of their love, to stay the hunger of the heart which craves the infinite to feed upon and love. But the affections also come back to the sad man with no return. "There is nought to love," say they; "nothing save man and the ideals of his heart; they are beautiful, but only bubbles; his warm breath fills them for a moment; how fair they shine, — they cool, they perish, and are not! The breath was but a part of the windy cheat which blows along the world, — the bubble breaks, and is nothing. There are only finite things for you to love; only finite things to love you in return." He presses the frail object of his affection closer and closer to his heart. "This, at least," say I, "is secure, and is a fact, — the dear one is

a reality, and not a dream." Still, there is a sadness in my eye, whence speaks the unrest and wasting of the heart which longs for the unchangeable lovely. Death comes down to separate me from the best beloved. Beauty forsakes the elemental clod; the lip is cold, the heart is still, the eye—its lovely light all quenched and gone. Where is the mind which once spoke to me in hand and lip; the affection which loved me, finding its delight in loving, serving, and in being loved? It is nothing; all gone,—like the rainbow of yesterday, no trace thereof still lingering on the sky. "But what!" say I, "is there nothing for me to love which will not pass away?" "No: love gravitation if you like, cohesion, the primary qualities of matter; nought else abides." I look up, and an ugly force is there, alien to my mind, foreign to my conscience, and hurtful to my heart, and wantonly strikes down the one I valued more than self, and sought to defend with my own bosom; then I die, I stiffen into rigid death. So the heathen fable tells that Niobe clung to her children with warding arms, while the envious deities shot child after child, daughters and fair sons, till the twelve were slain, and the mother, all powerless to defend her own, herself became a stone.

Last hope of all, as first not less of all, the atheist sends out his soul, to seek its rest, and bring back tidings of great joy. Throughout the vast inane it flies, feeling the darkness with its wings, seeking the soul of all, which at once is reason, conscience, and the heart of all that is, which will give satisfaction to the various needs of all. But the soul likewise comes back, empty and alone, to say, "There is no God, the universe is a disorder, man is a confusion; there is no infinite, no reason, no conscience, no heart, no soul of things." There is nought to reverence, to esteem, to worship, to love, to

trust in, nothing which in turn loves us with all its universal force. I am but a worm on the hot sand of the world, seeking to fly, but it is only the instinct of wings I feel; striving to walk, but handless and without a foot; essaying then to crawl, so it be only up. But there is not a blade of grass to hold on to and climb up by, not a weed to shelter me in the intolerable heat of life.

Thus left alone I look at the ground, and it seems cruel, — a mother that devours her young. No voice cries thence to comfort me; it is a force, but nothing more. Its history tells of tumult, confusion, and continual change; it prophesies no future peace, tells of no plan in the confusion. I look up to the sky, there looks not back again a kind Providence, to smile upon me with a thousand starry eyes, and bless me with the sun's ambrosial light. In the storms a vengeful violence, with its lightning sword, stabs into darkness, seeking for murderable men.

There is no providence, only capricious senseless fate. Here is the marble of human nature; the atheist would pile it up into palace or common dwelling; but there is only the fleeting sand to build on, which the rains wash away, or the winds blow off; nowhere is there eternal rock to found his building on. No, he has not daily bread, — nothing to satisfy the hunger of his mind, his conscience, and his heart, the famine of his soul; only the cold, thin atmosphere of fancy. Does he believe in immortality? — it is an immortality of fear, of doubt, of dread. Experience tells him of the history of mankind; a sad history it seems, — a record of war and want, of oppression and servility. He sees that pride elbows misery into the kennel, and is honored for the merciless act; that tyrants tread the nations under foot, while some

patriot pines to oblivion and death; he sees no prophecy of better things. How can he, — in an earth without a heaven, in a body without a soul, a world without a God?

Atheism sits down on the shore of time; the stream of human history rolls by, bearing successively, as bubbles on its bosom, the Egyptian civilization, — and it passes slowly by, with its myriads of millions, and the bubble breaks; the Hebrew, Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, Roman, Christian civilization, — and they pass by as other bubbles, with their many myriads of millions, multiplied by myriads of millions. Their sorrows are all ended; they were sorrows for nothing. The tears which furrowed the cheek, the unrequited heroism, the virtue unrewarded, — they have perished, and there is no compensation; because it is a body without a soul, an earth without a heaven, a world without a God. "Does not that content you?" asks our atheist.

No man can ever be content with that; few men ever come to it. "Thanks to the human heart by which we live," human nature stops a great way this side of that.

I am not a cowardly man; but if I were convinced there was no God, my courage would drop as water, and be no more. I am not an unhopeful man; there are few men who hope so much. I never despair of truth, of justice, of love, and piety. I know man will triumph over matter, the people over tyrants, right over wrong, truth over falsehood, love over hate. I always expect defeat to-day, but I am sure of triumph at the last; and with truth on my side, justice on my side, love on my side, I should not fear to stand in a minority of one, against the whole population of this whole globe of lands. I would bow and say to them, "I am the stronger. You may glory now, but I shall conquer you at last." Such hope have I for man here and hereafter, that the

wickedest of sinners, I trust, God will bring face to face with the best of men, his sins wiped clean off, and together they shall sit down at the table of the Lord, in the kingdom of God; but take away my consciousness of God, and I have no hope, — none for myself, none for you, none for mankind. If no mind in the universe were greater than Humboldt's, no ruler wiser than presidents, and kings, and senates, and congresses; if there were no appeal from the statutes of men to the laws of God, from present misery to future eternal triumph, on earth or in heaven, — then I should have no hope. But I know that the universe is insured at the office of the Infinite God, and no particle of matter, no particle of mind shall ever suffer ultimate shipwreck in this vast voyage of mortal and immortal life.

I am not a sad man. Spite of the experience of life, — somewhat bitter, — I am a cheerful, and joyous, and happy man. But take away my consciousness of God; let me believe there is no infinite God, no infinite mind which thought the world into existence, and thinks it into continuance, no infinite conscience which everlastingly enacts the eternal laws of the universe, no infinite affection which loves the world, — loves Abel and Cain, loves the drunkard's wife and the drunkard, the mayors and aldermen who made the drunkard, which loves the victim of the tyrant and loves the tyrant, loves the slave and his master, loves the murdered and the murderer, the fugitive and the kidnapper (publicly griping his price of blood, the third part of Iscariot's pay, and then secretly taking his anonymous revenge, stealthily calumniating some friend of humanity), — that there is no God who watches over the nation, but "forsaken Israel wanders lone;" that the sad people of Europe, Africa, America have no guardian, — then I should be sadder than

Egyptian night! My life would be only the shadow of a dimple on the bottom of a little brook, whirling and passing away; all the joy I have in the daily business of the world, in literature and science and art, in the friendships and wide philanthropies of the time, would perish at once, — borne down in the rush of waters, and lost in their headlong noise. Yes, I should die in uncontrollable anguish and grief.

A realizing sense of atheism, a realizing sense of the consequences of atheism, — that would separate our nature, and we should give up the ghost; and the elements of the body would go back to the elements of the earth. But — God be thanked! — the foundation of religion is too deep within us. There is a great cry through all creation for the Living God. Thanks to him, the evidence of God has been ploughed into nature so deeply, and so deeply woven into the texture of the human soul, that very few men call themselves atheists in this sense. No man ever willingly came to this conclusion, — no man; no, not one. These men who have arrived at this conclusion, we should cast no scorn at them; we should give them our sympathy, — a friendly heart, and the most affectionate and tender treatment of their soul.

Religion is natural to man. Instinctively we turn to God, reverence him, and rely on him. And when reason becomes powerful, when all the spiritual faculties get enlarged, and we know how to see the true, to will the just, to love the beautiful, and to live the holy, — then our idea of God rises higher and higher, as the child's voice changes from its treble pipe to the dignity of manly speech. Then the feeble, provisional ideas of God which were formed at first pass by us; the true idea of God gets written in our soul; complete beauty drives out partial ugliness, and perfect love casts out all partial fear.

SPECULATIVE THEISM, REGARDED AS A THEORY OF THE UNIVERSE.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. — Matthew x. 29.

. . . I USE the word theism, first, as distinguished from atheism, — that is, from the absolute denial of all possible ideas of God; second, as distinguished from the popular theology, which indeed affirms God, but ascribes to him a finite character, and makes him a ferocious God; and third, as distinguished from deism, which affirms a God without the ferocious character of the popular theology, but still starts from the sensational philosophy, abuts on materialism, derives its idea of God solely by induction from the phenomena of material nature or of human history, leaving out of sight the intuition of human nature, and so gets its idea of God solely from observation, and not at all from consciousness, and thus accordingly represents God as finite and imperfect. I use the word as distinguished from atheism, the denial of God; from the popular theology, which affirms a finite, ferocious God; and from deism, which affirms a finite God without ferocity. So much for the definition of terms. . . .

I. There must be many qualities of God not at all known to men, some of them not at all knowable by us, because we have not the faculties to know them by. Man's consciousness of God, and God's consciousness of himself, must differ immeasurably. God's conception

of himself must differ as much from our conception of him, as the constellation called the Great Bear differs from one of the beasts in the public den at Berne. For no man can ever have an exhaustive conception of God, — one, I mean, which uses up and comprises the whole of God. We have scarcely an exhaustive conception of anything. Certain properties and forces of things we know; substances of things are almost, if not quite, beyond our ken. But we may have such an idea of God as, though incomplete, is perfectly true, and comprises no quality which is not also a quality of God. Then our idea of God is true as far as it goes, only it does not describe the whole of God. To illustrate this, — a thimble cannot contain all the water in the Atlantic Ocean at once, but it may be brimful of water from the Atlantic Ocean, and it may contain nothing but water from the Atlantic Ocean. So our idea of God, though not containing the whole of him, may yet comprise no quality which is not a quality of God, and may omit none which it is needful for our welfare that we should know. In the self-consciousness of God subject and object are the same, and he must know all his own infinite nature. But in our consciousness of God the limitations of the finite subject make it impossible that we should comprehend God as he is conscious of himself. It is enough for us to know of the Infinite what is knowable to finite man.

With qualities not knowable to us I have nothing to do. I shall not undertake to discuss the psychology and metaphysics of God. The metaphysics of man are quite hard enough for me to grapple with and understand.

II. Then, as a next thing, God must be different in kind from what I call the universe, — that is, from nature, the world of matter, and from spirit, the world of

man. They are finite, he infinite; they dependent, he self-subsisting; they variable, he unchanging. God must include both matter and spirit.

There are two classes of philosophers often called atheists, but better, and perhaps justly, called pantheists.

One of these says, "There are only material things in existence," — resolving all into matter; "the sum total of these material things is God." That is material pantheism.

If I mistake not, M. Comte of Paris, and the anonymous author of the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation," with their numerous coadjutors, belong to that class.

The other class admits the existence of spirit, — sometimes resolves everything into spirit, — and says, "The sum total of finite spirit, that is God." These are spiritual pantheists. Several of the German philosophers, if I understand them, are of that stamp.

One difficulty with both of these classes is this: Their idea of God is only the idea of the world of nature and of spirit as it is to-day; and as the world of nature and of spirit will be fairer and wiser a thousand years hence than it is now, so, according to them, God will be fairer and wiser a thousand years hence than he is now. Thus they give you a variable God, who learns by experience, and who grows with the growth and strengthens with the strength of the universe itself. According to them, when there was no vegetation in the world of matter, God knew nothing of a plant, — no more than the stones on the earth. When the animal came, when man came, God was wiser; and he advances with the advance of man. When Jesus came, he was a better God. He was a wiser God after Newton and Laplace, and was

a more philosophical being after those pantheistic philosophers had taught him the way to be so; for their God knows nothing until it is either a fact of observation in finite nature, — in the material world, — or else a fact of consciousness in finite spirit, — in some man. He knows nothing till it is shown him. That is a fatal error with Hegel and his followers in England and America.

Mr. Babbage, a most ingenious Englishman, invented a calculating engine. He builded wiser than he knew; for by and by he found that his engine calculated conclusions which had never entered into the thought of Mr. Babbage himself. The mathematical engine outciphered its inventor. And these men represent God as being in just that predicament. The world is constantly revealing things unknown before, and which God had not conceived of. As there is a progressive development of the powers of the universe as a whole, and of each man, so there is a progressive development of God. He is therefore not so much a being as a becoming.

This idea of a progressive Deity is not wholly a new thing. The doctrine was obscurely held by some of the ancient philosophers in the time of Plato.

If God be infinite, then he must be immanent, perfectly and totally present in nature and in spirit. Thus there is no point of space, no atom of matter, but God is there; no point of spirit and no atom of soul, but God is there. And yet finite matter and finite spirit do not exhaust God. He transcends the world of matter and of spirit; and in virtue of that transcendence continually makes the world of matter fairer, and the world of spirit wiser. So there is really a progress in the manifestation of God, not a progress in God the manifesting. In thought you may annihilate the world of matter and of

man; but you do not thereby in thought annihilate the infinite God, or subtract anything from the existence of God. In thought you may double the world of matter and of man; but in so doing you do not in thought double the being of the infinite God; that remains the same as before.

That is what I mean when I say that God is infinite and transcends matter and spirit, and is different in kind from the finite universe. This is the great point in which I differ most widely from those philosophers. I find no fault with them. I differ from their conclusion.

III. As a third thing, the infinite God must have all the qualities of a perfect and complete being; must be complete in the qualities of a perfect being, perfect in the qualities of a complete one. To state that by analysis which I have just stated by synthesis, he must have the perfection of being, self-existence; the perfection of power, almightiness; the perfection of mind, all-knowingness; the perfection of conscience, all-righteousness; of affection, all-lovingness; of soul, all-holiness, perfect self-fidelity. Hence, as the result of all these, he must have the perfection of will, absolute freedom. I mean to say, according to this idea of God, there must be no limitation to his existence, his power, his wisdom, his justice, his love, his holiness, and his freedom; none from any outward cause, or any inward cause whatsoever. The classic, or Greek and Roman idea of God, represented him as finite, limited subjectively by elements of his own character, objectively limited by the elements of the material world! The popular theological idea in fact represents him as finite, limited subjectively by selfishness, wrath, and various evil passions; objectively by elements in the world of man which continually prove refractory and turn out as He did not

intend. In this matter of the infinity of God, I differ from the popular theology, as well as from the common scheme of philosophy.

So much for the idea of God considered as infinite. So much for its diversity from the common schemes.

Now look at this philosophical theism, with its idea of the infinite God, as a theory of the universe. Let me divide the universe into two great parts. One I will call the world of matter, and the other the world of spirit. By the world of matter I mean everything, except the Deity, known to us that is not man; and by the world of spirit I mean what is man, — both man in his material substance and in his spiritual substance. Let me say a word of each. For shortness' sake, I will call the world of matter nature. I begin with this, as it is the least difficult.

In nature God must be both a perfect cause and a perfect providence.

I. Of God as perfect cause. Creation itself, the non-existent coming into existence, is something unintelligible to us. But this we know, that the infinite God must be a perfect Creator, the sole and undisturbed author of all that is in nature. So there must be a complete and perfect harmony and concord between God and the nature which he creates, God and his works must be at one; and nature, so far as it goes, must represent the will and purpose of God, and nothing but the will and purpose of God. So, there can be nothing in nature which God did not put in nature from himself.

Well, God must have made nature first from a perfect motive; next, of perfect material; third, for a perfect purpose or end; fourth, as perfect means to achieve that purpose. That is, the motive for creation, the purpose of creation, must be in perfect harmony with the infinity

of God; in harmony with his infinite power, wisdom, justice, love, and holiness: the material of nature, and the means therein, with the constant modes of operation thereof, — the laws of nature, — must be perfectly adequate to the perfect purpose, and so must be in complete harmony with the infinite God; with his infinite power, infinite wisdom, justice, love, and holiness. That is very plain, following unavoidably from the idea of God as infinite.

Now, a perfect motive for creation, what will that be? It must be absolute Love producing a desire to bless everything which he creates; that is, a desire to confer such a form and degree of welfare on each thing which he makes as is perfectly consistent with the character and nature of that thing made, — that is, its highest form and degree of welfare. Absolute love is a perfect motive.

A perfect purpose or end of creation is the achievement of that bliss; not the achievement thereof to-day, but ultimately. Perfect material and means are those which perfectly achieve that purpose; not to-day, or when I will, or when the thing created wills, but when the infinite wisdom and love of God wills.

The infinite God must create all from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, of perfect material, as perfect means; for you cannot conceive of a God infinitely powerful, wise, just, loving, and holy, creating anything from an evil motive, for an evil purpose, from evil material, or as evil means. No more can you conceive of the infinite God creating anything from an imperfect motive, for an imperfect purpose, of imperfect material, or as imperfect means. Each of these suppositions is wholly inconsistent with the idea of the infinite God; for he can have only perfect motives, perfect purposes, perfect material, and perfect means to create out of, and

to create by. This being so, you see that the selfishness and destructiveness ascribed to God in the popular theology are at once struck out of existence. For such selfishness and destructiveness are absolutely impossible to the infinite God.

II. Next, of God as perfect providence. Creation and providence are but modifications of the same function. Creation is momentary providence; providence, perpetual creation. One is described by a point; the other by a line. Now, God is just as much present in a blade of grass or an atom of mahogany, this day and in every moment of its existence, as he was at the instant of its creation. Men say, "When God created matter he was present therein." Very true! but he is just as present therein, with all his powers, and just as active with all his perfections, at every moment while that matter exists as he was when it was first created. Men tell us when they read the Bible how grand it must have been to have stood in the presence of God when Moses miraculously smote the rock, which gushed with miraculous water. But every drop of water which falls from my roof in a shower, or from my finger, thus, has as much the presence of God in it as when, in Biblical phrase, "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy," at the creation of water itself. It cannot be created without God; it cannot subsist without God.

Here, too, in his providence the motive, the end, the material, and means must be infinitely perfect. Let me develop this a moment.

God at the creation must have known the action and history of each thing which he called into being just as well as he knows it now; for God's knowledge is not a becoming wiser by experience, but a being wise by nature. The infinite God must know every movement

of every particle of matter. We generally assent to that in the gross, and reject it in the detail. Let me give an example.

All the powers, and consequently all the action, movements, and history of the whole universe of matter whereof this solar system is a part, — a single

> "Branch of stars we see,
> Hung in the golden galaxy," —

all the powers, actions, movements, and history of the solar system itself, of its primaries and secondaries, must have been completely and perfectly known to God before the universe or any single "branch of stars" had its existence. So the powers and consequent history and movement of every particular thing on each of these orbs must have been known. The action and history of the mineral matter on the earth, in its inorganic form, in the form of crystal, liquid, gas; the action and history of vegetable matter, in the fucus, the lichen, and the tree; and so of animal matter, in the mollusk, the eagle, and the elephant, — all must have been completely and perfectly known by God before their creation; eternally known to him. The powers, and so the history, of each atom in nature must have been as thoroughly known to the Mind of the universe a million of million of years ago as at this day, — in their cause as well as by their effects.

For example, God must have known, at the moment of creation, the present position of this crescent moon which beautifies the early evening hour; and he must have known, too, the history of these molecules of carbon that make up the cotton thread which binds the sheets of this sermon together.

To say it short, the statics and dynamics of the universe, and of each atom thereof, must have been eter-

nally and thoroughly known to God. And each atom, with its statical and dynamical powers, — the mineral, vegetable, and animal forces of the universe — must have been created by him, from perfect motives, of perfect material, for a perfect purpose, and as perfect means; they must be continually sustained by him, and he must be just as present and just as active in each moment of the existence of any one of these things as at the creation thereof, or at the creation of the all of things. So, then, each of these must have been created with a perfect knowledge of its powers, actions, movements, and history, and created from love as motive, for ultimate good as purpose, of materials proportionate to the motive, and so adequate to the end, and accordingly provided with the means of accomplishing that purpose; for the infinite perfection of God would allow no absolute evil, no absolute imperfection, in his motive, or his material, in his purpose, or his means. If there were any such absolute evil or imperfection in the created, it could only have come from an absolute evil or imperfection in the Creator; that is, from a lack of infinite power, wisdom, justice, or love, — because God had not love enough to wish all things well, or justice enough to will them well, or wisdom enough to contrive them well, or power enough to make them well.

Each thing which God has made has a right to be created from perfect motives, for a perfect purpose, from perfect material, and as perfect means; and a right, also, to be perfectly provided for. I know, to some men it will sound irreverent to speak of the right of the created in relation to the Creator, and of the consequent duty and obligation of the Creator in relation to the created. But the infinite God is infinitely just, and it is with the highest reverence that I ask, Shall not the God of all the

earth do right? It is the highest reverence for the Creator to say that he gives his creatures a right to him, to him as infinite Cause, to him as infinite Providence; and I count it impious to say that God has a right to create even a worm from imperfect motives, for an imperfect purpose, of imperfect material, as imperfect means. This right of the creature depends on the nature of the thing, on its quality as a creation of the infinite God; not on the quantity of being it has received from him. So, of course, it is equal in all,—the same in the smallest "motes that people the sunbeams," and the greatest man; all have a birthright to the perfect providence of the infinite God; an unalienable right to protection by his infinite power, wisdom, justice, love, and holiness. This lien on the infinity of God vests in the substance of their finite nature, and is not to be voided by any accident of their history; for that accident must have been known and provided for as one of the consequences of their powers. Each thing has the infinite perfection of God as guarantee to that right. God is security for the universe, and his hand is endorsed on every great and little thing which he has made. Then, if I am sure of God and his infinity, I am sure beforehand of the ultimate welfare of everything which God has made; for the infinite Father is the pledge and collateral security, the endorser therefor.

We cannot comprehend the details of this providence, more than of creating, nor fully understand the mode of attaining the end; the mode of terminating, originating, and sustaining, are equally unintelligible to us; but the fact we know from the idea of God as infinite. As we cannot with a Gunter's-chain measure the distance between the sun and the earth, but as by calculation, starting from facts of internal consciousness and external

observation, we can measure it with greater proportionate exactness than a carpenter could measure the desk under my hand, — so we cannot understand God's mode of operation as cause or providence, more than an Indian baby, newly born in Shawneetown, could understand the astronomer's mode of operation in calculating the distance between the earth and the sun; but as we have this idea of God, though we know not the mode of operation, — the middle terms which intervene betwixt the purpose and the achievement, — we are yet sure of the fact that the motive, purpose, material, and means are all proportionate to the nature of the Creator, and adequate for the welfare of the created.

In nature God is the only cause, the only providence, the only power; the law of nature, — that is, the constant mode of action of the forces of the material world, — represents the modes of action of God himself, his thought made visible; and as he is infinite, unchangeably perfect, and perfectly unchangeable, his mode of action is therefore constant and universal, so that there can be no such thing as a violation of God's constant mode of action; for there is no power to violate it except God himself, and the perfectly infinite God could not violate his own perfect modes of action. And accordingly there is no chance, no evil, no imperfection, in motive or purpose, in material or means, or in the modes of action thereof. Everywhere is calculated order, nowhere chance and confusion; everywhere regular, constant modes of action of the forces in the material world, unvarying and eternal laws, nowhere is there an extemporaneous miracle. Men have their precarious makeshifts, the Infinite has no tricks and subterfuges, — not a miracle in nature, not a whim in God. Seeming chance is real direction; what looks like evil in nature is real

good. The sparrow that falls to-day does not fall to ruin, but to ultimate welfare. Though we know not the mode of operation, there must be another world for the sparrow as for man.

So much for this theism, as a theory of the world of matter. Now a word for it as a theory of the world of spirit, of the world of man. This shall include man so far as he is matter; and so far as he is matter and something more.

Look at this first in the most general way, in relation to human nature, to mankind as a whole; then I will come down to particulars. Here the same thing is to be said as of nature; namely, the infinite God must be a perfect cause thereof, and have created the world of man from perfect motives, for a perfect purpose, of perfect material, as perfect means. God has no other motive, purpose, material, or means. The perfect motive must be absolute love, producing the desire to bless the world of man, — that is, to desire to confer thereon a form and degree of welfare which is perfectly consistent with the entire nature of man. The perfect purpose must be the attainment of that bliss; the ultimate attainment not to-day, or when man wills, but when the infinite God wills. Perfect material is that which is capable of this welfare; and perfect means are such as achieve it.

So much for God considered as a perfect cause in the world of man. I need not here further repeat what I just said of creation in the world of matter.

But God must be also perfect providence for the world of man; he must be perpetually present therein, in each portion thereof. Men think that God was present in some moment of time, at the creation of mankind. Very true! but in each moment of mankind's existence since,

God is just as present; for providence is a continuous line of creations, and God is as much present, and as much active, at any point of that line as at the beginning or end thereof. I know men speak of yielding up the spirit and going out of the body, going to God. Is not God about, within, and around us, while we are in the body, just as much as when we shake off the known and enter on that untried being?

God must have known at the creation all the action and history of the world of man as well as of nature. It is not to be supposed that ten thousand years ago God knew less of human history than he knows to-day. That would be to make God imperfect in his wisdom, growing wiser by experience. Napoleon's *coup d'état* was a surprise to mankind ten months ago; do you think it was an astonishment to God ten months ago? Was it not infinitely known hundreds of millions of years ago, — eternally known? It must have been so.

I know the question is here more complicated than in nature, for in nature there is only one force, the direct statical and dynamical action of matter; and accordingly it is easy to calculate the action and result of mechanical, vegetable, electrical, and vital forces. But in the world of man there is a certain amount of freedom, and that seems to make the question difficult. In that part of the world of nature not endowed with animal life, there is no margin of oscillation; and you may know just where the moon will be to-night, and where it will be a thousand years hence. The constant forces with their compensations may all be known; and so every nutation of the moon is calculable with entire certainty. The modes of action there are as little variable as the maxims of geometry. The moon's node is an invariable consequent of material necessity. When a star with

fiery hair came splendoring through the night, it filled mediæval astronomers with amazement; and celibate priests, divorced from nature, shook with superstitious fear, as it wrote its hieroglyphic of God over Byzantium or Rome; was God astonished at his wandering and hairy star?

In the world of animals there is a small margin of oscillation; but you are pretty sure to know what the animals will do, — that the beaver will build his dam, and the wren her nest just as their fathers built; that every bee next summer will make her six-sided cell with the same precision and geometric economy of material and space wherewith her ancestors wrought ten thousand years ago.

But man has a certain amount of freedom, a larger margin of oscillation, wherein he vibrates from side to side. The nod of Lord Burleigh is a variable contingent of human caprice. Hence it is thought that God could not foreknow the oscillations of caprice in the human race, in the Adamitic Cain of ancient poetry, or the Napoleonic Cain of contemporaneous history, till after they took place. But that conclusion comes only from putting our limitations on God. It is difficult for the astronomer's little boy to measure the cradle he sleeps in, or to tell what time it is by the nursery clock; but the astronomer can measure the vast orbit of Leverrier's star before seeing it, and correct his clock by the great dial hung up in heaven itself; and the difference between the mind of the astronomer's boy and the mind of the astronomer is nothing compared to the odds between finite intellect and the infinite understanding of God. So, though the greater complication makes it more difficult for you and me to understand the consciousness of free men, whose feelings, thoughts, and consequent

actions are such manifold contingents, it is not at all more difficult for God.

Before the creation the infinite God, as perfect cause and providence, must have known all the powers and consequent actions, movements, and history of the collective world of men, and each individual thereof. For, either man has no freedom at all, or he has some freedom of will.

In the first case, if he has no freedom, no margin of oscillation, the fore-knowableness of his actions does not differ from that of the world of matter; and the nutation of the moon and the nod of Lord Burleigh are equally the invariable consequent of material or human necessity. Then God is the only force in the human world, and of course, without difficulty, knows all its action, for a knowledge of the world is only part of his consciousness of himself; the treachery of Judas and the faithfulness of Jesus are then but facts of the divine self-consciousness.

If there be freedom, then God, as the perfect cause of man's freedom of will, must have perfectly understood the powers of that freedom; and understanding perfectly the powers, he knew perfectly all the actions, movements, and history thereof, at the moment of creation as well as to-day. The perfect Cause must know the consequence of his perfect creation, and knowing the cause and the effects thereof, as perfect Providence, and working from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, with perfect material, and by perfect means, he must so arrange all things that the material shall be capable of ultimate welfare; and must use means proportionate to the nature and adequate to the purpose. So the quantity of human oscillation, with all the consequences thereof, must of course be perfectly known to God before

the creation as well as after the special events come to pass; for to God contingents of caprice and consequents of necessity must be equally clear, both before and after the event. Little boys, under a capricious schoolmaster, learn the constants of his anger's ebb or flow.

> "Full well the boding tremblers learn to trace
> The day's disaster in his morning face."

And do you think the infinite God is astonished at revolutions in Italy, or the discovery of ether? because a hyena, stealthily and at night, kills a girl in an Abyssinian town, or a kidnapper as stealthily and also by night, destroys a man in Boston? The hyena crouching in his den, the kidnapper lurking in his office, are both known to God.

Though human caprice and freedom be a contingent force, yet God knows human caprice when he makes it, knows exactly the amount of that contingent force, all its actions, movements, and history, and what it will bring about. And as he is infinitely wise, just, and loving Cause and Providence, so there can be no absolute evil or imperfection in the world of man, more than in the world of matter, or in God himself.

So much for this theism as a theory of the world of man as a whole, in its most general form.

Now see the concrete application thereof in the general human life — in the life of nations. In creating mankind God must have known there would come the great races of men, — Ethiopian, Malay, Tartar, American, Caucasian. He must have known there would come such families of the Caucasian as the Slavic, Classic, Celtic, Teutonic; such stocks of the Teutonic as the Scandinavian, the German, the Saxon; of the Saxon such nations as England and America; in their history

such events as the American Revolution, the Mexican War, and the like. I mean that God, as perfect cause, must have perfectly known all these things from eternity as well as now. History is a surprise to us, not to God. The breaking out of the Mexican War, the capture of Mexico, the failure or success of a general, might be an astonishment to men; God was not wiser afterwards than before. As perfect cause and providence, he must have arranged all things so that mankind as a whole shall attain that bliss which his perfect motive and perfect purpose require, which is indispensable to his perfect material and his perfect means. All the powers and consequent actions, movements, and history of mankind must therefore have been known and provided for. The savage, the barbarous, the half-civilized, and the civilized — the feudal and commercial periods, and others yet in store, must have been known and provided for. The whole religious history of man, Atheism, Fetichism, Polytheism, Monotheism, — the Monotheism of the Hebrews and of the Christians, — must have been known. The rise, decline, and fall of Egypt, India, Persia, Judea, Greece, Rome, and Byzantium, must have been as well understood by God at creation as now; and as perfect providence, he must have provided for the rise, decline, and fall thereof, so that they should be steps forward, toward ultimate bliss, and not from it. He must have given man his power of free will as all other powers, from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, of perfect material, and as perfect means; and of course it must achieve that purpose for mankind as a whole, for those great races, — Ethiopian, Malay, Tartar, American, Caucasian; for those families, — Slavic, Classic, Celtic, Teutonic; for those tribes, — Scandinavian, German, Saxon; for every nation, — England, America. The great events

of their history, — the American Revolution, the Mexican War, and every other, — must be so overruled and balanced that they shall contribute to the achievement of the purpose of God. And what is true of the whole must be true of each; and God must be perfect providence for one as well as for another, and so arrange these that they all shall come to ultimate bliss.

Therefore as you look on the sad aspect of the world at present, — on Italy, ridden by pope and priest; on Austria, Hungary, Germany, the spark of freedom trodden out by the imperial or royal hoof; on France, crushed by her own armies at the command of a cunning voluptuary; on Ireland, trodden down by the capitalists of Britain; on the American slave, manacled by state and church, — you know, first, that God foresaw all this at the creation, as a consequence of the forces which he put into human nature; next, you know that he provides for it all, so that it shall not interfere with the ultimate bliss of the Italian, pope-ridden and priest-ridden; of the Austrian, Hungarian, German, from whose heart the imperial or royal hoof has trod the spark of liberty; of the Frenchman, the victim of a voluptuous tyrant; of the Irishman, trodden down by the British capitalists; and of the American slave, fettered by the American church and manacled by the American state. God made the world so that these partial evils would take place, and they take place with his infinite knowledge, and under his infinite providence. So when we see these evils, we know that though immense they are partial evils compensated by constants somewhere, and provided for in the infinite engineering of God, so that they shall be the cause of some ultimate good. For mankind has a right to be perfectly created; each race, family, tribe, nation, has a right to be created from per-

fect motives for a perfect purpose, of perfect material, and with the means to achieve that purpose, — not at the time when Russia and Montenegro will, or when you and I will, but when infinite wisdom, justice, love, knows that it is best. And sad as the world looks, God knew it all, provided for it all; and its welfare, its ultimate triumph is insured at the office of the infinite God. His hand is endorsed on each race, each family, each tribe, each nation of mankind. You cannot suppose — as writers of the Old Testament do — that the affairs of the world look desperate to God, and he repents having made mankind, or any fraction of the human race.

See this theism in its application to individual human life, — your life and mine. God is perfect cause and perfect providence for me and you. Before the creation he knew everything that I shall do, everything that I shall suffer, everything that I shall be, — provided for it all, so that absolute bliss must be the welfare of each of us at last. The evil, — that is, the suffering in mind, body, and estate, the imperfect bliss, my failing to attain the outward or inward condition of this welfare, — these must come either from my nature, — my human nature as man, my individual nature as the son of John and Hannah, — or from my circumstances that are about me, or, as a third thing, from the joint action of these two.

God, as perfect cause, must have known my nature, my circumstances, the effect of their joint action; as perfect providence, he must have arranged things so that nature and circumstances shall work out for me and for everybody all this ultimate bliss which the perfect motive can desire as a perfect purpose, which perfect materials can achieve as perfect means. My individual suffering, error, sin, must have been equally foreseen, fore-cared for, and used in the great housekeeping of

the Eternal Mother as a means to accomplish the purpose of ultimate welfare.

This must be true of Jesus of Nazareth crucified, and of Judas Iscariot who betrayed him to the cross; of the St. Domingo hero who rotted in his dungeon, and of Napoleon the Great who locked his dungeon door, himself one day to be jailed on a rock, with Ocean mounting guard over this Prometheus of historic times; of theistic John Huss who blazed in his fire, and of the twenty-third John, the perjured pope of Rome, who lit that fire five hundred miles from home.

As at the creation of the world of matter God knew where the solar system would be in space, where the molecules of carbon which form the tie that binds my sermon together would be on this seventeenth of October, eighteen hundred and fifty-two years after the cradling of Jesus of Nazareth; as he arranged the universe so that the solar system and these molecules of carbon should harmonize together; as he knew of the rise, decline, and fall of States, and arranged all these things so as to harmonize with the march of man towards greater bliss, — so he must have known where this little atom of spirit which I call *me* would be this day, — what thoughts, feelings, will, and suffering I should have; and he must make all these harmonize with my march towards that ultimate bliss which my human nature needs to take, and which his infinite nature needs to give.

God is responsible for his own creation, — his world of matter and his world of man, — for mankind in general, for you and me. God's work is all warranted. Each man has a right to perfect creation, — creation from perfect motives, of perfect material, as perfect means, for a perfect purpose. God has no other purpose, no other

means, no other material, no other motive. He is the infinite power, wisdom, justice, love, and is security for the ultimate welfare of the sparrow that falls, — for mankind groping its dim and perilous way, for you and me darkly feeling our way along, often falling into pain, want, misery, and sin. God as cause, and God as providence has still means to bring us back, and lead us home. I have a natural, unalienable right to the providence of the infinite God; this providence is the duty of God, inseparable from his infinity. If I am sure that God is infinite, then all else that is good I am sure of; for everything which God makes is stamped by his hand with an unalienable right to him as infinite cause and infinite providence.

As God was present at the creation of matter and of mankind, present with all his infinite perfection, and active therewith, — so is he present and active with me to-day with all his infinite perfections; then as cause, so now as providence. And do you think the universe will fail of its purpose, with infinite God as its providence and its cause? Do you think any nation, any single human soul, can ever fail of achieving this ultimate bliss, with infinite God as its cause and infinite God as its providence? Why, so long as God is God, it is impossible that his motive and purpose should fail to design good for all and each, or his materials and means fail to achieve that ultimate good.

Well, since these things are so, how beautiful appears the material world! There is no fortuitous concourse of atoms, which the atheist talks of; there is no universe of selfishness, no grim despot who grinds the world under his heels and then spurns it off to hell, as the popular theology scares us withal. Everything is a thought of infinite God; and in studying the move-

ments of the solar system, or the composition of an ultimate cell arrested in a crystal, developed in a plant, in tracing the grains of phosphorus in the brain of man, or in studying the atoms which compose the fusel-oil in a drop of ether, or the powers and action thereof, — I am studying the thought of the infinite God. The universe is his scripture, — nature the prose, and man the poetry of God. The world is a volume holier than the Bible, old as creation. What history, what psalms, what prophecy therein! what canticles of love to beast and man! — not the "Wisdom of Solomon," as in this Apocrypha, but the wisdom of God, written out in the great canon of the universe.

Then, when I see the suffering of animals, — the father-alligator eating up his sons and daughters, and the mother-alligator seeking to keep them from his jaws, — when I see the sparrow falling at a dandy's shot, I know that these things have been provided for by the God of the alligator and the sparrow, and that the universe is lodged as collateral security to insure bliss to every sparrow that falls.

From this point of view how beautiful appears the world of man! When I look on the whole history of man, — man as a savage, as a barbarian, as half-civilized or as civilized, feudal or commercial, fighting with all the forces which chemistry and mechanical science can offer, and suffering from want, war, ignorance, from sin in all its thousand forms, from despotic oppression in Russia, democratic oppression in America; when I see the tyranny of the feudal baron in other times, with his acres and his armies, — of the feudal capitalist now-a-days, the commercial baron, with notes at cent per cent; when I see the hyena of the desert stealing his prey in an Abyssinian town, and the hyena of the city

kidnapping a man in Boston,—when I see all this, I say the thing is not hopeless. Oh, no! it is hopeful. God knew it all at the beginning, as perfect cause; cared for it all, as perfect providence, with perfect motive, purpose, material, means; will achieve at last ultimate welfare for the oppressor and the oppressed.

I see the individual suffering from want, ignorance, and oppression,—the public woe which blackens the countenance of men; the sorrow which with private tooth gnaws the heart of Ellen or William; the sin which puts out the eyes of Cain or George. Can I fear? Oh, no! though the worm of sorrow bore into my own heart, I cannot fear. The infinite God, with infinite power, wisdom, justice, holiness, and love, knew it all, and made the nature of Ellen and William, of Cain and George, and controls their circumstances, so that by their action and the action of the world of man and the world of matter, the perfect motive and the perfect means shall achieve the perfect purpose of the infinite loving-kindness of God.

Then how grand is human destination! ay, your destination and mine! There is no chance; it is direction which we did not see. There is no fate, but a Mother's providence holding the universe in her lap, warming each soul with her own breath, and feeding it from her own bosom with everlasting life.

In times past there is evil which I cannot understand; in times present evil which I cannot solve,—suffering for mankind, for each nation, for you and me, sufferings, follies, sins. I know they were all foreseen by the infinite wisdom of God,—all provided for by his infinite power and justice; and his infinite love shall bring us all to bliss, not a soul left behind, not a sparrow lost. The means I know not; the end I am sure of.

"Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,
Thy hands made both, and I am there;
Thy power and love, my love and trust,
Make one place everywhere."

In the world of matter there is the greatest economy of force. The rain-drop is wooed for a moment into bridal beauty by some enamored ray of light, then feeds the gardener's violet, or moves the grindstone in the farmer's mill, — serving alike the turn of beauty and of use. Nothing is in vain; all things are manifold in use. "A rose, beside his beauty, is a cure." The ocean is but the chemist's sink, which holds the rinsings of the world; and everything washed off from earth was what the land needed to void, the sea to take. All things are two-fold; matter is doubly winged, with beauty and with use.

"Nothing hath got so far
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey;
His eyes dismount the highest star;
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

"For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our delight or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

"The stars have us to bed;
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws;
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind
In their descent and being; to our mind
In their ascent and cause."

And do you then believe that the great God, whose motto "Waste not, want not," is pictured and practised on

earth and sea and sky, is prodigal of human suffering, human woe? Every tear-drop which sorrow has wrung from some poor negro's eye; every sigh, every prayer of grief, each groan which the exile puts up in our own land, and the groan which the American exile puts up in Canada, — while his tears shed for his wife and child smarting in the tropics are turned to ice before they touch the wintry ground, — has its function in the great chemistry of our Father's world. These things were known by God; and he will bring every exile, every wanderer, in his arms, — the great men not forgot, the little not less blest, — and bear them rounding home from bale to bliss, to give to each the welfare which his nature needs to give and ours to take.

The atheist looks out on a here without a hereafter, a body without a soul, a world without a heaven, a universe with no God; and he must needs fold his arms in despair, and dwindle down into the material selfishness of a cold and sullen heart. The popular theologian looks out on the world, and sees a body blasted by a soul, a here undermined by a hereafter of hell, arched over with a little paltry sounding-board of heaven, whence the elect may look over the edge and rejoice in the writhings of the worms unpitied beneath their feet. He looks out, and sees a grim and revengeful and evil God. Such is his sad whim. But the man with pure theism in his heart looks out on the world, and there is the infinite God everywhere as perfect cause, everywhere as perfect providence, transcending all, yet immanent in each, with perfect power, wisdom, justice, holiness, and love, securing perfect welfare unto each and all.

On the shore of time, where Atheism sat in despair, and where Theology howled with delight at its dream of hell all crowded with torment at the end, — there sits

Theism. Before it passes on the stream of human history, rolling its volumed waters gathered from all lands, — Ethiopian, Malay, Tartar, Caucasian, American, — from each nation, tribe, and family of men; and it comes from the infinite God, its perfect cause; it rolls on its waters by the infinite providence, its perfect protector. He knew at creation the history of empires, these lesser dimples on the stream; of Ellen and William, Cain and George, the bubbles on the water's face. He provided for them all, so that not a dimple deepens and whirls away, not a bubble breaks, but the perfect providence foresaw and fore-cared for it all. God is on the shore of the stream of human history, — infinite power, wisdom, justice, love; God is in the air over it, where floats the sparrow that fell, falling to its bliss, — in the waters, in every dimple, in each bubble, in each atom of every drop. And at the end the stream falls into the sea, — that Amazon of human history, under the line of providence, on the equator of the world, — falls into the great ocean of eternity; and not a dimple that deepens and whirls away, not a bubble that breaks, not a single atom of a drop, is lost. All fall into the ocean of blessedness which is the bosom of love; and then the rush of many waters sings out this psalm from human nature and from human history, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

A SERMON OF PROVIDENCE.

God will provide. — Gen. xxii. 8.

In a previous sermon I have already spoken of the infinite God as cause, and as providence. But the constant relation of God to the world which he creates and animates is a theme too important to be left with the merely general treatment I have bestowed upon it. Atheism and the popular theology are both so unphilosophical in their views of the conduct of the universe; the function ascribed to finite chance, the Supreme of the atheist, in the one case, and to the finite God, the Supreme of the theologian, in the other, is so at variance with the primitive spiritual instincts of human nature, and so unsatisfactory to the enlightened consciousness of cultivated and religious men, that the subject demands a distinct and detailed investigation by itself. It will require three sermons, — the first going over the matter very much at large and treating of Providence in its universal forms, the others relating to the application thereof to the various phenomena of evil — to pain and sin. I shall not hesitate to repeat the same thoughts and even the same forms of expression previously made use of in these sermons. I do this purposely, both to avoid the needless multiplication of terms, and the better to connect this whole series of discourses together.

The notion that God continually watches over the world and all of its contents is one very dear to mankind.

It appears in all forms of conscious religion. The worshippers of a fetich regards his bit of wood, or amulet, as a special Providence working magically and exceptionally for his good alone. Polytheism is only the splitting up of the idea of God into a multitude of special Providences — each one a sliver of deity. Thus man has "parcelled out the glorious name." The Catholic invokes his patron-saint, who is only a rude symbol and mind-mark of that Providence which is always at hand. Pantheism puts a providence in every blade of grass, in each atom of matter. The Epicureans of old time denied the providence of God, and dreamed of lazy deities all heedless of the world. But their theory is eminently exceptional in the theological world, — yet performing a service, and correcting the extravagance of men who run too far, in devout exaggeration attributing all to God's act.

In virtue of the functions of providence ascribed to God, he is called by various names : Lord, or King, means providential master ruling the world and exploitering its inhabitants for his good, not theirs. That is the favorite Old Testament notion and title of God; he is King, men are subjects, or even slaves. Yet other names therein appear, for the Old Testament is not unitary. In the New Testament, from his providential function, God is often called Father, indicating the affection which controls his power, — that he is not merely King over subjects, and Lord over slaves, but a Father who rules his children for their good, restrains that he may develop, and seemingly hinders that he may really help. Hence, in the Old Testament, slaves are bid to fear God; in the New Testament, children are told to love him. However, the New Testament is not more unitary in this respect than the Old, and the cruel God appears often in

the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, — not a Father, but only a Lord and King, exploitering a portion of the human race with merciless rapacity.

A king is bound politically to provide for his subjects, inasmuch as he is king; political providence is the royal function. A father is affectionally and paternally bound to provide for his children, inasmuch as he is father; affectional providence is the paternal function. But as the father, or the king, is limited in his powers, so the paternal or political function is limited; for duty does not transcend the power to do. Their providence is necessarily imperfect, not reaching to all persons in the kingdom, or to all actions of their subjects. A good king and a good father, both, wish to do a good deal more for their charge than it is possible for them to do. Their desirable is limited by their possible.

The infinite God is infinitely bound to provide for his creatures, inasmuch as he is infinite God: infinite providence is the divine function, — his function as God.

A duty involves reciprocal obligation; a right is the correlative of a duty. There is a human duty to obey, reverence, and love God, with our finite nature; but also, and just as much, is there a human right to the protection of God. So there is a divine duty on God's part, of providence toward man, as well as a divine right of obedience from man. I mean to say, as it belongs to the finite constitution of man to obey, reverence, and love God, — the duty of the finite toward the Infinite; so it belongs to the infinite constitution of God to provide for man, — the duty of the Infinite toward the finite. Obedience belongs to man's nature, providence to God's nature. We have an unalienable lien upon his infinite perfection.

I know men often talk as if God were not amenable

to his own justice, and could with equal right care for his creatures or neglect them; that his almighty power makes him capable of immeasurable caprice, and liberates him from all relation to eternal right. Hence it is often taught that God may consistently make a vessel of honor or of dishonor out of this human clay, as the potter does; or may consistently jest with his material, waste it, throw it away, destroy it as the potter's apprentice does for sport in some moment of caprice; or may break the finished vessel, as the potter himself does when drunk or angry. In virtue of this general notion, it is popularly taught in all Christendom, that God will thus waste some of his human clay, casting human souls into endless misery; and in the greater part of Christendom it is taught that he will destroy the majority of mankind in this way; that he has a natural right to do so, and man has no right to anything but the caprice of God.

This doctrine is odious to me; and I see not how men can entertain such an idea of God and still call him good. This doctrine is equally detestable whether you consider it in relation to the condition of men consequent thereon, or to the character of God which causes that condition. This false idea tends to unsettle men's moral convictions. The consequence appears in various forms. The State teaches in practice that national might is national right; that so far as the State is concerned there is no right and no wrong; whatever it may will is justice, the nation not amenable to moral law. The Church theoretically teaches that infinite might is infinite right; that God repudiates his own justice; that so far as God is concerned there is no right, no wrong; with him caprice stands for reason. The atheist agrees with the theologians in this, only he rejects the ecclesiastical phraseology, knowing no God.

I will not speak of mercy, commonly conceived of as the limitation of might, strong manly justice obstructed by womanly sentiment and weakness. But speaking of bare justice I say, that from the idea of God as infinite, it follows that he has no right to call into being a single soul and make that soul miserable for its whole life; or to inflict upon it any absolute and unrecompensed evil; no right to call into life a single worm and make that worm's life a curse to itself. It is irreverent and impious to teach that he could do this. It is a plain contradiction to the idea of God. It is as impossible for him to create anything from an imperfect motive, for an imperfect purpose, of imperfect material, or as imperfect means, as it would be for him to make right wrong, the same thing to be and not to be, or one and one not two, but two thousand. I as finite man am amenable to the laws of my finite, human nature; he as infinite God to the laws of his infinite, divine nature. To say that God has a right or a desire to repudiate his infinite justice, that he will do it, or that as God he can, is as absurd as to say that he will and can make one and one two thousand and not two. And to me it seems as impious as to say there is no God. Indeed it is a denial of God, not a negation of his existence, but of the very substance of his being.

From the infinite perfection of God it follows that his providence is infinite, that is, completely perfect and perfectly complete; that as cause and providence he works continually to bless his creatures, and only to bless them.

This must be so; for the opposite could only come from a defect of wisdom — he did not know how to bring about their welfare; from a defect of justice — he did not will their welfare; from a defect of love — he did not desire it; from a defect of power — he could not

bring it to pass; from a defect of holiness — he would not use the power, love, justice, and wisdom for his creatures' sake. This might be said of conceptions of God as finite, — of Baal, Melkarth, Jupiter, Odin, Jehovah, — never of the infinite God; he, inasmuch as he is God, must exercise an infinite providence over each and all his works. The universe, that is, the sum total of created matter and created mind, must be perfectly fitted to achieve the purpose which God designs; that must be a benevolent purpose, involving the greatest possible bliss for each and all, for the infinite God could desire no other end.

From this it follows that the material part of the universe, and its spiritual part also, must be perfectly adapted to this end. A perfect whole, material or spiritual, consists of perfect parts, each answering its several purpose, and so the whole fulfilling the purpose of the whole. No part must be lost; no part absolutely sacrificed to the good of another, or of all others, and to its own harm and ruin.

All this follows unavoidably from the idea of God as infinitely perfect. Starting from this point all seems plain. But concrete things often seem imperfect because they do not completely serve our transient purpose, while we know not the eternal purposes of God. We look at the immediate and transient result, not at the ultimate and permanent. Thus the mariner cannot come to port by reason of the storm and rocks which obstruct his course; he thinks the weather imperfect, the world not well made; and you often hear men say, "How beautiful the world would be if there were no storms, no hurricanes, no thunder and lightning." While, if we could overlook the cosmic forces which make up the material world, we should see that every actual

storm and every rock was needful; and the world would not be perfect and accomplish its function had not each been just in its proper time and place.

An oak-tree in the woods appears quite imperfect. The leaves are coiled up and spoiled by the leaf-roller; cut to pieces by the tailor-beetle; eaten by the hag-moth and the polyphemus, the slug-caterpillar and her numerous kindred; the twigs are sucked by the white-lined tree-hopper, or cut off by the oak-pruner; large limbs are broken down by the seventeen-year locust; the horn-bug, the curculio, and the timber-beetle eat up its wood; the gad-fly punctures leaf and bark, converting the forces of the tree to that insect's use; the grub lives in the young acorn; fly-catchers are on its leaves; a spider weaves his web from twig to twig; caterpillars of various denominations gnaw its tender shoots; the creeper and the wood-pecker bore through the bark; squirrels, — striped, flying, red, and gray, — have gnawed into its limbs and made their nests; the toad has a hole in a flaw of its base; the fox has cut asunder its fibrous roots in digging his burrow; the bear dwells in its trunk which worms, emmets, bees, and countless insects have helped to hollow; ice and the winds of winter have broken off full many a bough. How imperfect and incomplete the oak-tree looks, so broken, crooked, cragged, gnarled, and grim! The carpenter cannot get a beam, the millwright a shaft, or the ship-builder a solid knee for his purpose; even the common woodman spares that tree as not worth felling; it only cumbers the ground. But it has served its complicated purpose, — given board and lodging to all these creatures, from the ephemeral fly, joying in its transient summer, to the brawny bear for many a winter hibernating in its trunk. It has been a great woodland caravansary, even a tavern and chateau, to all that hete-

rogeneous swarm; and though no man but a painter thinks it a perfect tree, — and he only because the picturesque thing serves his special purpose, — no doubt the good God is quite contented with his oak, and says, "Well done, good and faithful servant." He designed it to serve these manifold uses, and to furnish beauty for the painter's picture and meaning for the preacher's speech. Doubtless it enters into the joy of its Lord, having completely served his purpose; He wanted a caravansary and chateau for those uncounted citizens. To judge of it we must look at all these ends, and also at the condition of the soil that had a superabundance of the matter whereof oak-trees are made.

We commonly look on the world as the carpenter and millwright on that crooked oak, and because it does not serve our turn completely we think it an imperfect world. Thus men grumble at the rocky shores of New England, its sterile soil, its winters long and hard, its cold and biting spring, its summers brief and burning, and seem to think the world is badly put together. They complain of wild beasts in the forests, of monsters in the sea, of toads and snakes, vipers and many a loathsome thing, hideous to our imperfect eye. How little do we know! A world without an alligator, or a rattle-snake, a hyena, or a shark, would doubtless be a very imperfect world. The good God has something for each of these to do, — a place for them all at his table, and a pillow for every one of them in Nature's bed.

Though theologians talk of the infinite goodness of God and the perfection of his providence, they have yet a certain belief in a devil; even if it is not always a personal devil, at any rate it is a principle of absolute evil, which they fear will somehow outwit and override God, getting possession of the world; will throw sand

into the delicate watch-work of the universe, and completely thwart the providence of the Eternal.

This comes from that dark notion of God which haunts the theology of Christendom — yea, of the Hebrew, the Mahometan, and Hindoo world. It is painful to see how this notion prevails amongst intelligent and religious men. They tell you of the greater activity of the evil principle; they see it in the insects which infest the grain and fruit-trees of New England, forgetting that God takes care of these insects as well as of man. When we study deeper, we see that there is no evil principle, but a good principle, so often misunderstood by men. If we start with the idea of the infinite God we know the purpose is good before we comprehend the means thereto.

There are two ways in which men assert the doctrine of God's providence, two philosophical and antagonist doctrines thereof.

I. One makes God the only will in creation; animals are mere machines, wholly subordinate to their organization; man is also a mere machine, wholly subordinate to his organization. Thus all the action in the world, material and spiritual, is the action of God. The universe consists of two parts, one real, the other phenomenal. First, there is God the actor; next, a parcel of tools or puppets, wholly passive, having no will or life of their own; and with these God works or plays. On this supposition his providence has a clean sweep of the universe: every sentiment, good or bad; every thought, true or false; every deed, blessing or baneful, is his work. The sun is an unconscious instrument of God; I am a conscious instrument, but still a bare tool in God's hand, not a free agent.

This comprehensive scheme, reducing life to mechan-

ism, appears in many forms. It belongs to the gross philosophy of the materialist; it is the cardinal doctrine of the pantheist, material or spiritual, the most offensive and dangerous of his doctrines. It is the great idea with the fatalists of all classes. But it appears in the theological sects also, as well as in philosophic parties; for a man cannot escape from his first principle, neither in philosophy nor in theology. It lies at the basis of the Catholic and Protestant theology. Calvin and d'Holbach agree in this. The contradiction it leads to is plain in the preaching and writings of almost every Calvinistic or Catholic theologian who tries to reconcile his theology with the common facts of consciousness. Now he tells you, You must do for yourself, and then God will help you; but adds, You can do nothing till God begins it for you. The popular hymn contains the same contradiction:

> "Bound on a voyage of awful length,
> Through dangers little known,
> A stranger to superior strength,
> Man vainly trusts his own.
>
> "But oars alone will not prevail
> To reach the distant coast;
> The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
> Or all the work is lost."

But in Dr. Hopkins and Dr. Emmons and their followers and predecessors, as well Protestant as Catholic, this doctrine is carried out to its natural results: in defiance of consciousness, they boldly and simply declare that God is the direct author of every thought and feeling, will and deed. It is curious to see how men reach the same result, starting from opposite points; curious to see how antinomianism — Catholic or Protestant — arrives at the most objectionable characteristic of pantheism, which it yet so abhors.

On this hypothesis the function of Providence appears quite simple; all action is God's action. The phenomenal actor may be human, but the only real agent is God. For example, Cain kills Abel with a club, the spite of his heart flashing from his angry eye. That is the phenomenon. But the fact is, God killed Abel with Cain's arm; Cain and the club were equally passive instruments in the hand of God. Here the intervention of Cain, with his malicious sentiment and flashing eye, is only a part of the stage machinery, for theatrical effect, but the contriver and worker of it all is God. His ways are simple; matter and man have really nought to do. This doctrine shocks common-sense, and is at war with the consciousness of every man. It is eminently at war with religious feeling; for on this supposition actual suffering and sin are of no human value; they lead to nothing; it is in vain for the grass to grow, the human hay is cut and dried by foreordination.

II. The other doctrine of Providence makes man's will free, absolutely free, — not at all conditioned by circumstances, bodily organization, and the like. The philosophical question of freedom and necessity I do not design to enter upon. It is one of the most difficult questions in metaphysics, and I certainly am not able to solve the riddle. There are difficulties in either hypothesis, and I have not psychological science enough to explain them in the court of intellect. Philosophy is intellect working in the mode of art; common-sense is intellect working after its natural instinct, not in the technical mode of art. Philosophy demonstrates; common-sense convinces without demonstration. In default of philosophy, we must follow common sense; that does not settle the matter scientifically and ultimately, but practically and provisionally, subject to revision in

another court. But common-sense decides in favor of freedom. Every man acts on that supposition, and supposes that other men are likewise free. Courts of law proceed on this hypothesis; public opinion distributes praise or blame; my own conscience commends, or else cries out against me. I am conscious of freedom.

But a little experience shows that this freedom has its limitations and is not absolute. It is conditioned on every side, — by my outward circumstances, the events of my history, the accidents of education, the character of my parents and daily associates; by the constitution of my body, — its varying health, hunger and thirst, youth, manhood, and old age. In comparison with a shad-fish, or a blackbird, Socrates has a good deal of freedom, and is not so much subordinate to his organization or his circumstances as they; but in comparison with the infinite freedom of God his volitiveness is little. To speak figuratively, it seems as if man was tied by two tethers, — the one of historic circumstance, the other of his physical organization, — fastened at opposite points; but the cord is elastic, and may be lengthened by use, or shortened by abuse and neglect; and within the variable limit of his tether man has freedom, but cannot go beyond it. Still further, to carry out the figure, one man gets entangled in his confining line and does not use half the freedom he might have; another continually extends it and becomes more free.

It is plain, that however these circumstances may or may not limit our ideas, or will, they must determine the form of our conceptions and our power to execute them in works.

On the hypothesis that man is absolutely or partially free, the function of Providence is much more complicated. There are primary and secondary powers; there

are other agents beside God, using the power derived from him to work with after their own caprice; so God acts in part by means of the free will of men. This theory seems to me conformable to common-sense and common consciousness, and is perhaps the most philosophic of any that has yet been arrived at.

So much for these two theories of Providence.

There are two modes in which God's providence is commonly supposed to act, — namely, the general and the special.

God's general providence, it is said, takes in the greater part of cases in the material and spiritual world, and provides for them. In his general providence, God is thought to accomplish his function by general laws, which are a constant mode of operation, representing the continual and inferior activity of God; but this does not extend to all cases. God's special providence attends to particular cases, not otherwise provided for, and disposes of them. One is a court of common or statute law, the other a court of equity. In special providence God is supposed not to act by general laws but without them, or against them. All normal action in nature comes from general providence; all miracles from special providence. Thus a freshet in the Connecticut, and the annual rising of the Nile, belong under the general providence of God and come by the action of steadfast laws; but the miraculous flood in the time of Noah came of God's special providence, having no cause in nature, only in the caprice of God. This form of special providence in nature is known only to the theologian, not to the man of science.

To take examples from human affairs, it is maintained that God's general providence waited on the whole human race, but the Hebrews were under his special

providence, and he went so far in their case as to make a contract with Abraham, which St. Paul thought he was under an obligation to keep, and could not invalidate.

All men in general are under the general providence, but Christians enjoy the special providence of God, or as Dr. Watts has it,

> "The whole creation is thy charge,
> But saints are thy peculiar care."

It is said that the forms of religion in China, India, Egypt, Greece and Mexico, came by the general providence of God, growing out of the nature of man, or coming at the instigation of the devil, having their route in the human or the infernal nature; while the Hebrew and the Christian forms of religion came by his special providence, started in God, and were miraculously transplanted to human soil.

Certain Christians are thought still more eminently under God's special providence. They are the "elect," and the world was made for them. The Mahometan thinks the same of his form of religion and of the elect Mussulmans. Christian theologians say that saints, the elect, share the "covenanted mercies" of God and are favorites, enjoying his special providence, while the rest of men are left to his "uncovenanted mercies," and have need to tremble. The governor of Massachusetts, a few years ago, in his proclamation for a day of fasting, invited men to pray God to bless the whole United States in general, but to have "a special care of the good State of Massachusetts." The Hebrews, thinking God cared nothing for the Gentiles, praised him, saying, "Thou didst march through the land in indignation. Thou didst thrash the heathen in anger; thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people;" "Thou didst drive out the heathen with thine hand."

So Christians think God has his favorites amongst men, and, like a partial father, takes better care of some of his children than of the rest; you and I share his common concern and are under his general laws; Jesus of Nazareth had his special care and was under special laws. It would be thought a great impiety to suppose that God felt as much concern for Judas as for Jesus, and would no more suffer the son of Simon to be ultimately lost, than the son of Mary. Yet if you think twice you will see that the impiety is on the other side; for if God does not care as much for Iscariot as for Christ, as much desiring and insuring the ultimate triumph of the one as the other, then he is not the infinite Father whose ways are equal to all his children, but partial, unjust, cruel, wicked, and oppressive. You do not think so well of the British government because it neglects its feeblest subjects, the laboring millions, making England the paradise of the rich and strong, the purgatory of the wise and good, and the hell of the poor and weak. You condemn the government of the United States because it has its favorites, and oppresses and enslaves the feeblest of its citizens to increase the riches of indolent and cruel men. You would not employ a schoolmaster who turned off the dull boys and beat the bad ones, disposed to truancy and mischief, driving them out into the streets to swelter in crime, to fester in jail, or rot on the gallows. What indignation would suffice towards a mother who neglects a backward boy, takes no pains with the girl that is a cripple, or with a son who has an organic and hereditary tendency to dissipation and licentiousness? I do not like to say a man is impious without proof that he means it; but to attribute so base a character and such unjust conduct to God as you would not respect in a government, allow in a schoolmaster, or endure in a

mother, is thoughtless, to say the least of it. But that is the common idea of God in the Christian churches, and the common idea of his providence.

The modern notion of a special providence, wherein God acts without law or against law, is the most spiritual and attenuated form of the doctrine of miracles, the last glimmering of the candle before it goes out. Men who give up the miraculous birth of Jesus still claim that he was under the special providence of God. As the State has general laws which apply well enough to the majority of cases, but has special legislation for the exceptional cases which were not provided for by the general statutes ; and as it has a jury whose function is to determine if the law shall punish this or the other man who has violated it, — so the popular theology teaches that God's providence has its general legislation, which applies well enough to the majority of cases, and its special legislation, which applies only to the exceptional cases, with its particular mercy, which, like the jury, refuses to execute the law when it seems too hard. For it is tacitly taken for granted by the popular theology that God did not foresee and provide for all the wants of the universe, material or spiritual, but is sometimes taken by surprise, things not turning out as he designed or expected, and so he has to interfere by special miracles, to mend his work, to set up makeshifts and provisional expedients. Thus it is represented that the loneliness of Adam in Paradise, his seduction and fall, the subsequent wickedness of his descendants, the transgressions of the Hebrews, and the general sinfulness of mankind at a later day, were all a surprise to the Creator, things not turning out according to his thought. New expedients must accordingly be devised to meet the unexpected emergency.

In like manner it is taught that Jesus of Nazareth was under the special providence of God; that all history prepared for him and pointed to him; that he had a special mission, while you and I are only under the general providence; history has not prepared for us, does not point to us, and we have no special mission, — in short, that Jesus is a providential man, with a providential function and history, while you and I are not providential men, and have no providential history or function.

This common theological notion of the limited general providence and limited special providence of God belongs to the very substance of the popular theology, and springs from its idea of God as finite in power, in wisdom, in justice, and in love. Some ancient and some modern philosophers, seeing the change and progress in manifestation, believe there is a corresponding change in the manifestor, and declare God is not a being but a becoming. The popular theology has the same vice, — though the theologians are not conscious thereof, and denounce it, — believing that God grows wiser by experiment, and must alter his plans. Yet in contradiction of their own statements, they declare him without variableness and shadow of turning; while according to the popular theology the history of God is a history of revolutions, even in his dealing with his chosen people, — the revelation through the Messiah being flat opposite to the revelation through Moses, which it annuls. Pantheism and the popular theology, hostile as they are, agree in this strange conclusion, the negation of the Infinite, and the affirmation of a variable God. The pantheist consciously denies the one and affirms the other, in laying down his premises; the theologian does it unconsciously, in developing his conclusions.

From the nature of God as infinite, from the relation

he sustains to the creation, as perfect and perpetual cause thereof, it follows that his providence must be not barely special, — eminently providing for certain things, — or general, — taking care of the great mass, but letting exceptional particulars slip through his fingers, — it must be universal. It must extend to each thing he has created, to all parts of its existence and to every action thereof. If it be not so, then either some parts of creation are entirely derelict of God, destitute of his providence, without his care, neglected by him, and outlaws of God, put to the ban of the universe, or else destitute of his providence during some portions of their existence, or in some acts of their lives. Either case is at variance with the infinite nature and function of God. For when the infinite God created the universe, it must have been from a perfect motive, of a perfect material, for a perfect purpose, and as a perfect means thereto; and he must therefore have understood it all completely, in each of its parts, and perfectly, in all the details of each part; and, knowing all the powers, he foreknows all the actions, necessitated or contingent, and provides for each. This must be true of the universe as a whole, and of each part thereof. All its actions must be thus provided for. The laws of the universe, — the constant modes of operation of the material or human forces, — must be founded on this complete and perfect knowledge, and coextensive therewith, and be exponents of that motive and servants of that purpose. This is what is meant when it is said the laws of matter and of mind belong to the nature and constitution of matter and of mind. These laws are formed after a complete knowledge of all their properties, functions, and consequences. Before there were two particles of matter in existence, the infinite God must have understood the law of attraction, — in its larger form

as gravitation, its smaller as cohesion, — and have known that thereby the tower of Siloam would one day fall and slay eighteen men; that many a beetling crag would tumble to the ground, and Alpine landslips bring thousands of men to premature destruction. But all those laws thus made must coincide with the motive of God and be means for his purpose; they must suit the welfare of the whole creation and of each part thereof. This must be true of the material world, which is unconscious and not free; of the animal world, which is not free, yet partially conscious; of the human world, which is conscious and partially free; and of all superhuman worlds, with higher degrees of consciousness and freedom.

To this universal extent must all things be under the providence of God; to this extent his constant modes of operation must needs reach out.

Then if you look at the relation of God to any one thing, — say the grub of a buprestian beetle boring into the bough of the oak I just now spoke of, — it seems as if God made the bough of the tree expressly for that little incipient insect; and the oak for the bough; and the soil for the oak: the globe, with all its ups and downs, which geology relates, seems made for the soil; and the universe for the globe. So it appears that that little larva of a beetle is the end, or final cause, of the universe, stands on the top of the world, and has all creation to wait on him, with the God thereof as providential overseer. Then, regarding this grub as the one thing the universe was designed to serve, theologians might say, "Behold God's providence is special; he has special legislation to suit this buprestian grub, and has aimed the whole world at this mark. See how all things prepare for that; the sun and moon are only its forerunners, and in the fulness of time behold a grub!"

But when the theologian studies the condition of the next grub in an oak-apple, or a gall-nut, or in the nearest bough, he finds them all as well-conditioned, and sees that God takes care of the lymexylon, the hylecætus, and the brenthus, as well as of the buprestian; that each of them stands just as much on the top of the world, with the universe to wait thereon, and God as overseer. You may study all the inhabitants of the oak-tree, — the toad, the squirrel, the fox, the bear, — it is true of them all. Yes, it is true of every special thing in the world, when you fully understand that special thing in all its existence, in each act of its life. We cannot by experiment and observation prove this so clearly in every case as in some special cases, but starting with the idea of God as infinite, the conclusion follows at once, — that his providence in reference to each particular thing is a perfect providence.

Then if you look at the relation of God to the whole universe, you see that, as far as you understand it, the whole is as well taken care of and provided for as the most contented grub who lives on the bounty of the oak; and you say, "Here is general providence, God acting by general laws for general purposes; things work well on the whole, and 'if now a bubble bursts, and now a world,' it is only a small exception. The attraction of gravitation is a good thing, it keeps the world together; and if the tower of Siloam, thereby falling to the ground, slays eighteen men of Jerusalem, that number is too small to think of, considering the myriad millions who are upheld by this same law."

A law that is perfectly special, providing for each, is also completely general, providing for all. In other words, it is universal. God's providence must be infinite, like his nature. Special and general are only

forms in which we conceive of that providence; in its relation to a single thing men name it special, to many things, general, while it extends to all and is universal. Accordingly, it neither requires nor admits of miraculous makeshifts and provisional expedients, which theologians think indispensable to their finite God.

When God created mankind, he must have given thereto the powers which are requisite to accomplish all his purpose. This must be true of mankind as a whole, and of Amos and Habakkuk, — of each man, as a part thereof; of each man considered individually as an integer, and considered socially, or humanly, as a fraction of the community, or race, and so a factor in the social, or general human result of the life of mankind. Of course, God must foreknow what use or abuse would be made of these powers, given in their present proportion, just as well as he knows it now, after all the experience of centuries. Knowing human nature, he must foreknow human history. For example, God must have foreknown that young children would stumble bodily in getting command of their limbs, in learning to walk, and suffer pain in consequence thereof; that older children would stumble spiritually in getting command of their spirits, in learning to think and to will, and suffer in consequence of that; that mankind as a whole would stumble in getting command of the material world, and the development of their human powers, and accorddingly there would be suffering from that cause.

Now God, inasmuch as he is God, acts providentially in nature, — not by miraculous and spasmodic fits and starts, but by regular and universal laws, by constant modes of operation; and so takes care of material things without violating their constitution, acting always according to the nature of the things which he has made. It

is a fact of observation that in the material and unconscious world he works by its materiality and unconsciousness, not against them; in the animal world by its animality and partial consciousness, not against them. Judging from the nature of God and of man, it must be concluded that in the providential government of the world, he acts also by regular and universal laws, by constant modes of operation; and so takes care of human things without violating their constitution, acting always according to the human nature of man, not against it, working in the human world by means of man's consciousness and partial freedom, not against them.

Here, in the human world, God's providence must be as complete and as perfect as there, in the material or animal world, in each department acting by the natural laws thereof, not without or against them. As by the very constitution of material or animal things God's providence acts by the natural laws thereof, — statical, dynamical, and vital laws, — so from the very constitution of man it appears that God's perfect providence must work according to the spiritual laws thereof; for it is not conceivable either that God should devise laws not adequate for his purpose, or capriciously depart from them if made adequate. Call this providence special as it applies to Hophni and Phineas, or general as it applies to all the children of Jacob, it is plain that it must be universal, applying to all material, animal, and human things.

If these things are so, if God be infinite, then the Hebrew nation is under his universal providence; but the Amalekites whom the Hebrews overthrew, and the Romans who conquered the conquerors, and the Goths who vanquished the Romans, are all and equally under the universal providence of God, who cares equally for them all. Not only are the nations under his providence in

their great acts, but in their little every-day transactions. Theologians love to think that God was present with the Hebrews in their march out of Egypt, at Mount Sinai, — that their exodus and legislation were providential. It is all true; but the same Providence watched equally over the English Pilgrims, in their exodus, over the British Parliament making laws at Westminster, the American Congress at Philadelphia and Washington. It is well to see this fact in Hebrew history; well also to go farther forward and see it in all human history, and to know that human nature is divine providence.

The common theological notion of a special providence, with its special favorites, is full of mischief. Some intensely national writer in the Hebrew Old Testament tells us that Noah cursed the descendants of Ham for their father's folly; theologians inform us that in consequence thereof his descendants are cast-off, outlaws from God. But there are no outlaws from the infinite Father: to say he casts off any child of his, Hebrew or Canaanite, is as absurd as to say he alters the axioms of mathematics, or the truths of the multiplication-table. It is inconsistent with the nature and constitution of the infinite God; it is as impossible as that one and one should be two thousand, and not two. The African nations, whom the Caucasians enslave, must be as dear to God as the pale tyrant who exploiters them, — just as much under his infinite providence, which will not suffer any ultimate and unrecompensed evil to befall the black or white.

All individuals, then, must be equally under the same providential care of the infinite God; not merely great men, the Charlemagnes, the Cromwells, the Napoleons, "men of destiny" as they are called, but the little men; not merely the good men, the heroes of religion, the

Moseses and the Jesuses, but ordinary men, and wicked men, not barely in their great moments, when they feel conscious of God, but in their daily work and humble consciousness. Then it is plain that not only Moses and Jesus are providential men intrusted with a special mission, but you and I and each man are just as much providential men, equally intrusted with a mission, not the less special because it is humble and our powers are weak. The unnatural Spartan father rejects and disdains his idiot girl, leaving her to perish on Mount Cithæron; the theologian casts off his son, grown up wicked and a public criminal, leaving him to perish unpitied in his jail. But the loving-kindness of the infinite Father watches over the fool, the tender mercy of the infinite Mother takes up the criminal when mortal parents let him fall. There is no child of perdition before the infinite God.

Now God, as the infinitely perfect, must accomplish his providential function by the laws which belong to the nature and constitution of things; that is, by the normal and constant mode of operation of the natural powers resident in those things themselves, — in material and animal nature by the forces and laws thereof; in human nature by its forces and its laws. For as providence is the divine execution in time of the eternal divine purpose, it is absurd to say that God supersedes or annuls the means which he primarily designed for that purpose. The classic deist supposed the material world was the work of one God, and the arrangement of human affairs the work of another. Between the two there was a collision and a quarrel, the world-governor must interfere with the work of the world-maker. Causality and providence were antagonistic. But with the idea of the infinite God this antithetic dualism vanishes at once away.

The creative causality of the infinite God is likewise conservative and administrative providence. So, from the nature of the infinitely perfect God and the consequent perfection of his motive, material, purpose, and means thereto, it follows that he will not destroy as infinite providence what he created as infinite cause; that he will not violate the laws and break the constitution which he himself has made. Accordingly, in the midst of God's providence working from a perfect motive, for a perfect purpose, and by means of the constitution and nature of man, — a Providence extending to all men and to their every act, — it is plain that human freedom is safe, and the ultimate welfare of each man is made sure of, as certain as the existence of God, or of man.

Atheism tells you of a world without a God, a great going, but a going with none to direct; the popular theology tells that this going is directed by a finite and changeable God, jealous, revengeful, loving Jacob and hating Esau, working by fits and starts, even in wrath destroying what he made imperfect, to begin anew, and designing to torment the great mass of mankind in everlasting woe — "miserable to have eternal being." But with the absolute religion, a knowledge of God as infinite, how different do all things appear! We have confidence, absolute trust in the motive and purpose of God, absolute trust also in the means which he has provided in the nature and constitution of things. The human faculties become then the instruments of providence. Every man is under the protection of God, and all fear of the final result, for you, or me, or for mankind, quite vanishes away. The details we know not. Experience reveals them a day-full at a time; the result we are sure of.

Timid men, who think that God is miserly, and the great Hunker of the universe, sometimes fear the mate-

rial world will not hold out; some little "perturbations" are discovered; now the earth approaches the sun for many years, perhaps never twice has described exactly the same track, they fear the earth will fall into the fire and the world be burned up. But by-and-by we find that these "perturbations" only disturbed the astronomer, doubtful of God; that to the Cause and Providence of the world they were eternally known, fore-cared for; that they are normal acts of faithful matter, and so all undisturbed the world rolls on. Constant is balanced by constant. Variable holds variable in check. In her cyclic rotation round the earth the moon nods; the earth oscillates in her rhythmic round, while the sun nods also, as the centre of gravity of the solar system shifts now a little this way, then a little that; nay, the whole solar system, it is likely, swings a little from side to side: but all this has been foreseen, provided for, balanced by forces which never sleep, and one thing set over against another in such a sort that all work together for good, and the great chariot of heaven sweeps on through starry space keeping its God-appointed track. Such is the providence of God in matter; not an atom of star-dust is lost out of the sky, not an atom of flower-dust is lost from off this dirty globe: such are the laws by which God works his functions out in nature. Ignorance is full of dread, and starts at terrors in the dark, trembles at the earthquake and the storm. But science justifies the ways of God to matter, knowing all and loving all, — discloses everywhere the immanent and ever active force. Where science does not understand the mode of action, nor read the title of perfection clearly in the work, it points to the infinite perfection of the Author, and we fear no more.

OF JUSTICE AND THE CONSCIENCE.

Turn, and do justice. — Tobit xiii. 6.

EVERYWHERE in the world there is a natural law, that is a constant mode of action, which seems to belong to the nature of things, to the constitution of the universe: this fact is universal. In different departments we call this mode of action by different names, — as, the law of matter, the law of mind, the law of morals, and the like. We mean thereby a certain mode of action which belongs to the material, mental, or moral forces, the mode in which commonly they are seen to act, and in which it is their ideal to act always. The ideal laws of matter we only know from the fact that they are always obeyed; to us the actual obedience is the only witness of the ideal rule, for in respect to the conduct of the material world the ideal and the actual are the same.

The laws of matter we can learn only by observation and experience. We cannot divine them and anticipate, or know them at all, unless experience supply the facts of observation. Before experience of the fact, no man could tell that a falling body would descend sixteen feet the first second, twice that the next, four times the third, and sixteen times the fourth. The law of falling bodies is purely objective to us; no mode of action in our consciousness anticipates this rule of action in the outer world. The same is true of all the laws of matter. The ideal law is known because it is a fact. The law is imperative; it must be obeyed without hesitation. In the

solar system, or the composition of a diamond, no margin is left for any oscillation of disobedience; margins of oscillation there always are, but only for vibration as a function, not as the refusal of a function. Only the primal will of God works in the material world, — no secondary finite will.

In nature, the world spread out before the senses, — to group many specific modes of action about a single generic force, — we see there is the great general law of attraction, which binds atom to atom in a grain of sand, orb to orb, system to system, gives unity to the world of things, and rounds these worlds of systems to a universe. At first there seem to be exceptions to this law, — as in growth and decomposition, in the repulsions of electricity; but at length all these are found to be instantial cases of this great law of attraction acting in various modes. We name the attraction by its several modes, — cohesion in small masses, and gravitation in large. When the relation seems a little more intimate, we call it affinity, as in the atomic union of molecules of matter. Other modes we name electricity and magnetism; when the relation is yet more close and intimate, we call it vegetation in plants, vitality in animals. But for the present purpose all these may be classed under the general term attraction, considered as acting in various modes of cohesion, gravitation, affinity, vegetation, and vitality.

This power gives unity to the material world, keeps it whole; yet, acting under such various forms, gives variety at the same time. The variety of effect surprises the senses at first; but in the end the unity of cause astonishes the cultivated mind. Looked at in reference to this globe, an earthquake is no more than a chink that opens in a garden-walk of a dry day in summer. A sponge is porous, having small spaces between the solid

parts; the solar system is only more porous, having larger room between the several orbs; the universe yet more so, with vast spaces between the systems; a similar attraction keeps together the sponge, the system, and the universe. Every particle of matter in the world is related to each and all the other particles thereof; attraction is the common bond.

In the spiritual world, the world of human consciousness, there is also a law, an ideal mode of action for the spiritual forces of man. To take only the moral part of this sphere of consciousness, we find the phenomenon called justice, the law of right. Viewed as a force, it bears the same relation in the world of conscience that attraction bears in the world of sense. I mean justice is the normal relation of men, and has the same to do amongst moral atoms — individual men, — moral masses — that is, nations, — and the moral whole — I mean all mankind — which attraction has to do with material atoms, masses, and the material whole. It appears in a variety of forms not less striking.

However, unlike attraction, it does not work free from all hindrance; it develops itself through conscious agents that continually change, and pass by experiment from low to high degrees of life and development to higher forms of justice. There is a certain private force, personal and peculiar to each one of us, controlled by individual will; this may act in the same line with the great normal force of justice, or it may conflict for a time with the general law of the universe, having private nutations, oscillations, and aberrations, personal or national. But these minor forces, after a while, are sure to be overcome by the great general moral force, pass into the current, and be borne along in the moral stream of the universe.

What a variety of men and women in the world! — ten hundred million persons, and no two alike in form and lineament; in character and being how unlike; how very different as phenomena and facts! What an immense variety of wish, of will, in these thousand million men! — of plans, which now rise up in the little personal bubble that we call a reputation or a great fortune, then in the great national bubble which we call a State! for bubbles they are, judging by the space and time they occupy in this great and age-outlasting sea of human kind. But underneath all these bubbles, great and little, resides the same eternal force which they shape into this or the other special form; and over all the same paternal Providence presides, and keeps eternal watch above the little and the great, producing variety of effect from unity of force. This Providence allows the little bubbles of his child's caprice, humors him in forming them; gives him time and space for that, understands his little caprices and his whims and lets him carry them out awhile; but himself, with no whim and no caprice, rules there as universal justice, omniscient and all-powerful. Out of his sea these bubbles rise; by his force they rise; by his law they have their consistence; and the private personal will, which gives them size or littleness and normal or abnormal shape, has its limitation of error marked out for it which cannot be passed by. In this human world there is a wide margin for oscillation; refusal to perform the ideal function has been provided for, redundance made to balance deficiency; checks are provided for every form of abnormal action of the will.

Viewed as an object not in man, justice is the constitution or fundamental law of the moral universe, the law of right, a rule of conduct for man in all his moral relations. Accordingly, all human affairs must be subject

to that as the law paramount; what is right agrees therewith and stands; what is wrong conflicts and falls. Private cohesions of self-love, of friendship, or of patriotism, must all be subordinate to this universal gravitation towards the eternal right.

We learn the laws of matter, that of attraction, for example, by observation and reflection; what we know thereof is the result of long experience, — the experienced sight and the experienced thought of many a thousand years. We might learn something of the moral law of justice, the law of right, in the same way, as a merely external thing. Then we should know it as a phenomenon, as we know attraction; as a fact so general that we called it universal and a law of nature. Still it would be deemed only an arbitrary law, over us, indeed, but not in us, — or in our elements, not our consciousness, — which we must be subordinate to, but could not become coördinate with; a law like that of falling bodies, which had no natural relation with us, which we could not anticipate or divine by our nature, but only learn by our history. We should not know why God had made the world after the pattern of justice, and not injustice, any more than we now know why a body does not fall as rapidly the first as the last second of its descent.

God has given us a moral faculty, the conscience, which is able to perceive the moral law directly and immediately, by intuitive perception thereof, without experience of the external consequences of keeping or violating it, and more perfectly than such experience can ever disclose it. For the facts of man's history do not fully represent the faculties of his nature, as the history of matter represents the qualities of matter. Man, though finite, is indefinitely progressive, continually

unfolding the qualities of his nature; his history, therefore, is not the whole book of man, but only the portion thereof which has been opened and publicly read. So the history of man never completely represents his nature; and a law derived merely from the facts of observation by no means describes the normal rule of action which belongs to his nature. The laws of matter are known to us because they are kept; there the ideal and actual are the same; but man has in his nature a rule of conduct higher than what he has come up to, — an ideal of nature which shames his actual of history. Observation and reflection only give us the actual of morals; conscience, by gradual and successive intuition, presents us the ideal of morals. On condition that I use this faculty in its normal activity, and in proportion as I develop it and all its kindred powers, I learn justice, the law of right, the divine rule of conduct for human life; I see it, not as an external fact which might as well not be at all as be, or might have been supplanted by its opposite, but I see it as a mode of action which belongs to the infinitely perfect nature of God; belongs also to my own nature, and so is not barely over me, but in me, of me, and for me. I can become coördinate with that, and not merely subordinate thereto; I find a deep, permanent, and instinctive delight in justice, not only in the outward effects, but in the inward cause, and by my nature I love this law of right, this rule of conduct, this justice, with a deep and abiding love. I find that justice is the object of my conscience, — fitting that as light the eye and truth the mind. There is a perfect agreement between the moral object and the moral subject. Finding it fit me thus, I know that justice will work my welfare and that of all mankind.

Attraction is the most general law in the material

world, and prevents a schism in the universe; temperance is the law of the body, and prevents a schism in the members; justice is the law of conscience, and prevents a schism in the moral world, amongst individuals in a family, communities in a State, or nations in the world of men. Temperance is corporeal justice, the doing right to each limb of the body, and is the mean proportional between appetite and appetite, or one and all; sacrificing no majority to one desire, however great, — no minority, however little, to a majority, — but giving each its due, and to all the harmonious and well-proportioned symmetry that is meet for all. It keeps the proportions betwixt this and that, and holds an even balance within the body, so that there shall be no excess. Justice is moral temperance in the world of men. It keeps just relations between men; one man, however little, must not be sacrificed to another, however great, to a majority, or to all men. It holds the balance betwixt nation and nation, for a nation is but a larger man; betwixt a man and his family, tribe, nation, race; between mankind and God. It is the universal regulator which coördinates man with man, each with all, — me with the ten hundred millions of men, so that my absolute rights and theirs do not interfere, nor our ultimate interests ever clash, nor my eternal welfare prove antagonistic to the blessedness of all or any one. I am to do justice, and demand that of all, — a universal human debt, a universal human claim.

But it extends further; it is the regulator between men and God. It is the moral spontaneousness of the infinite God, as it is to be the moral volition of finite men. The right to the justice of God is unalienable in men, the universal human claim, the never-ending gift for them. Can God ever depart from his own justice,

deprive any creature of a right, or balk it of a natural claim? Philosophically speaking, it is impossible, — a contradiction to our idea of God. Religiously speaking, it is impious, — a contradiction to our feeling of God. Both the philosophic and the religious consciousness declare it impossible that God should be unjust. The nature of finite men claims justice of God; his infinite nature adjusts the claim. Every man in the world is morally related to each and all the rest. Justice is the common human bond. It joins us also to the infinite God. Justice is his constant mode of action in the moral world.

So much for justice, viewed as objective, — as a law of the universe, the mode of action of the universal moral force.

Man naturally loves justice for its own sake, as the natural object of his conscience. As the mind loves truth and beauty, so conscience loves the right; it is true and beautiful to the moral faculties. Conscience rests in justice as an end, as the mind in truth. As truth is the side of God turned towards the intellect, so is justice the side of him which conscience looks upon. Love of justice is the moral part of piety.

When I am a baby, in my undeveloped moral state I do not love justice, nor conform to it; when I am sick, and have not complete control over this republic of nerves and muscles, I fail of justice and heed it not; when I am stung with beastly rage, blinded by passion, or over-attracted from my proper sphere of affection, another man briefly possessing me, I may not love the absolute and eternal right, private capillary attraction conflicting with the universal gravitation. But in my maturity, in my cool and personal hours, when I am most myself, and the accidents of my bodily temperament and local surroundings are controlled by the substance of my

manhood, then I love justice with a firm, unwavering love. That is the natural fealty of my conscience to its liege lord. Then I love justice, not for its consequences for bodily gain, but for itself, for the moral truth and loveliness thereof. Then if justice crown me I am glad, not merely with my personal feeling, because it is I who wear the crown, but because it is the crown of justice. If justice discrown and bind me down to infamy, I still am glad with all my moral sense and joy in the universal justice, though I suffer with the private smart. Though all that is merely selfish and personal of me revolts, still what is noblest, what I hold in common with mankind and in common with God, bids me be glad if justice is done upon me; to me or upon me, I know it is justice still, and though my private injustice be my foe, the justice of the universe is still my friend. God, acting in this universal mode of moral force, acts for me, and the prospect of future suffering has no terror.

Men reverence and love justice. Conscience is loyal; moral piety begins early, the ethical instinct prompting mankind, and in savage ages bringing out the lovely flower in some woman's character where moral beauty has its earliest spring. Commonly, men love justice a little more than truth; they are more moral than intellectual; have ideas of the conscience more than of the mind. This is not true of the more cultivated classes in any civilization, but of the mass of men in all; their morals are better than their philosophy. They see more absolute truth with the moral than with the intellectual faculty. The instinct for the abstract just of will is always a little before the instinct for the abstract true of thought. This is the normal order of development. But in the artificial forms of culture what is selfish and for one takes rank before what is human and for all.

So cultivated men commonly seek large intellectual power as an instrument for their selfish purposes, and neglect and even hate to get a large moral power, the instrument of universal benevolence. They love the exclusive use of certain forms of truth, and neglect justice, which would make the convenience of every truth serve the common good of all. Men with large moral power must needs work for all; with merely large intellectual power they may work only for themselves. Hence crafty aristocracies and monopolists seek for intellectual culture as a mode of power, and shun moral culture, which can never serve a selfish end. This rule holds good of all the great forms of civilization, from the Egyptian to the British; of all the higher seminaries of education, from the propaganda of the Jesuits to a New England college. In all the civilized nations at this day the controlling class is intellectual more than moral; has more power of thought than power of righteousness. The same fact appears in the literature of the world. The foremost class in culture, wealth, and social rank have less than the average proportion of morality. Hence comes the character of laws, political, social, and ecclesiastical institutions, — not designed for all, but for a few, at best a part, because the makers did not start with adequate moral power, nor propose justice as an end.

Yet the mass of men are always looking for the just; all this vast machinery which makes up a State, a world of States, is, on the part of the people, an attempt to organize justice; the minute and wide-extending civil machinery which makes up the law and the courts, with all their officers and implements, on the part of mankind, is chiefly an effort to reduce to practice the theory of right. Alas! with the leaders of civil and political affairs it is quite different, — often an organization of

selfishness. Mankind reaches out after the absolute right, makes its constitutions to establish justice and provide for the common defence. We report the decisions of wise men and of courts; we keep the record of cases decided, to help us judge more wisely in time to come. The nation would enact laws; it aims to get the justest men in the State, that they may incorporate their aggregate sense of right into a statute. We set twelve honest men to try an alleged offender; they are to apply their joint justice to the special case. The people wish law to be embodied justice, administered without passion. I know the government seldom desires this; the people as seldom fail of the wish. Yet the mass of men commonly attribute their own moral aims to every great leader. Did they know the actual selfishness and injustice of their rulers, not a government would stand a year. The world would ferment with universal revolution.

In savage times, duelling and private revenge grew out of this love of justice. They were rude efforts after the right. In its name a man slew his father's murderer, or, failing thereof, left the reversion of his vengeance as a trust in the hands of his own son, to be paid to the offender or his heir. With the Norsemen it was deemed a crime against society to forgive a grievous wrong, and "nidding" is a word of contempt to this day. It was not merely personal malice which led to private revenge; which bade the Scottish mother train up one son after another filled with a theological hatred against their father's murderer; not a private and selfish lust of vengeance alone which sustained her after the eldest and then the next of age perished in the attempt, and filled her with a horrid joy when the third succeeded. It was "wild justice" in a wild age, but always mixed with passion, and administered in hate: private ven-

geance edged the axe with which wild justice struck the blow. Even now, in the ruder portions of America, South and West, where the common law is silent, and of statutes there are none, or none enforced when a wrong is done, the offended people come forth and hold their court, with summary process, brief and savage, to decree something like justice in a brutal way; rage furnishing the occasion, conscience is still the cause.

All these things indicate a profound love of justice inherent in mankind. It takes a rude form with rude men, is mixed with passion, private hate; in a civilized community it takes a better form, and attempts are made to remove all personal malice from the representatives of right. A few years ago men were surprised to see the people of a neighboring city for the first time choose their judges; common elections had been carried there by uncommon party tricks; but when this grave matter came before the people, they laid off their party badges, and as men, chose the best officers for that distinguished trust.

The people are not satisfied with any form of government or statute law until it comes up to their sense of justice; so every progressive State revises its statutes from time to time, and at each revision comes nearer to the absolute right which human nature demands. Mankind, always progressive, revolutionizes constitutions, changes and changes, seeking to come close to the ideal justice, the divine and immutable law of the world, to which we all owe fealty, swear how we will.

In literature men always look for poetical justice, desiring that virtue should have its own reward and vice appropriate punishment, not always outward, but always real, and made known to the reader. All students of English history rejoice at the downfall of Judge Jeffries.

In romances we love to read of some man or maid oppressed by outward circumstances, but victorious over them; hawked at by villains whose foot is taken in their own snare. This is the principal charm in the ballads and people's poetry of England and Germany, and in the legends of Catholic countries. All men sympathize in the fate of Blue Beard and "the guardian uncle fierce." The world has ready sympathy with the Homeric tale of Ulysses returning to his Penelope, long faithful, but not grown old with baffling the suitors for twenty years. It is his justice and humanity which give such a wide audience to the most popular novelist of our day. But when a writer tries to paint vice beautiful, make sin triumphant, men shrink away from the poison atmosphere he breathes. Authors like Filmer, Machiavel, and Hobbes arouse the indignation of mankind. The fact of personal error it is easy to excuse, but mankind does not forgive such as teach the theory of sin. We always honor men who forget their immediate personal interests and use an author's sacred function to bear witness to the right.

The majority of men who think have an ideal justice better than the things about them, juster than the law. Some paint it behind them, on the crumbling walls of history, and tell us of "the good old times;" others paint it before them, on the morning mist of youthful life, and in their prayers and their daily toil strive after this, their New Jerusalem. We all of us have some ideal; our dream is fairer than our day; we will not let it go. If the wicked prosper, it is but for a moment, say we; the counsel of the froward shall be carried headlong. What an ideal democracy now floats before the eyes of earnest and religious men, — fairer than the "republic" of Plato, or More's "Utopia," or the "golden age" of fabled memory! It is justice that we want to

organize, — justice for all, for rich and poor. There the slave shall be free from his master. There shall be no want, no oppression, no fear of man, no fear of God, but only love. "There is a good time coming," — so we all believe when we are young, and full of life and healthy hope.

God has made man with the instinctive love of justice in him, which gradually gets developed in the world. But in himself justice is infinite. This justice of God must appear in the world, and in the history of men; and, after all "the wrongs that patient merit of the unworthy takes," still you see that the ploughshare of justice is drawn through and through the field of the world, uprooting the savage plants. The proverbs of the nations tell us this: "The mills of the gods grind slow, but they grind to powder;" "Ill got ill spent;" "The triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment;" "What the devil gives he also takes;" "Honesty is the best policy;" "No butter will stick to a bad man's bread." Sometimes these sayings come from the instinct of justice in man, and have a little ethical exaggeration about them, but yet more often they represent the world's experience of facts more than its consciousness of ideas.

Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the right. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. Things refuse to be mismanaged long. Jefferson trembled when he thought of slavery and remembered that God is just. Ere long all America will tremble. The Stuarts in England were tyrannical and strong; respectable and peaceful men

kept still awhile, and bore the tyranny; but men who loved God and his justice more than house and land fled to the wilderness and built up a troublesome commonwealth of Puritans. Such as stayed at home endeavored for a while to submit to the wrong; some of them made theories to justify it. But it could not be; the tyranny became unbearable even to barons and bishops; one tyrant loses his head, another his crown; no Stuart must tread again the English soil; legitimacy becomes a pretender.

England would rule America, not for our good, but hers alone. We forgot the love which bound the two people into one family; the obstinate injustice of the mother weakened the ties of language, literature, religion, — the Old England and the New read the same Bible, — kindred blood and institutions inherited from the same fathers; we thought only of the injustice; and there was an ocean between us and the mother country. The fairest jewel fell from the British crown.

In France, kings, nobles, clergy, trod the people down. Men bore it with the slow, sad patience of humanity, bore it out of regard for the "divinity that doth hedge a king," for the nobility of the noble, and the reverence of the priest. But in a few years outraged humanity forgot its slow, sad patience, and tore away this triple torment, — as Paul, escaped from wreck, shook off the viper from his hand, — and trod the venomous beast to dust. Napoleon came, king of the people. Justice was his word, his action for a while. The nation gathered about him, gave him their treasure and their trust. He was strong through the people's faith; his foes fell before him; ancient thrones tottered and reeled, and came heavy to the ground. The name of justice, of the rights of man, shook down their thrones, and organized

victory at every step. But he grows giddy with his height; selfishness takes the place of justice in his counsels; a bastard giant sits on the throne whence the people had hurled off "legitimate" oppression; he fights no more the battles of mankind; justice is exiled from his upstart court. The people fall away; victory perches no more on his banner. The snows of Russia cut off his army, but it was his own injustice that brought Napoleon to the ground. Self-shorn of this great strength, the ablest monarch since Charlemagne sits down on a little island in the tropic sea, and dies upon that lonely rock, his life a warning, to bid mankind be just and not despise the Lord. No mightiness of genius could save him, cut off from the moral force of the human race. Can any tyrant prosper where such a master fell?

Look at the condition of Christendom at this day; what tyrant sits secure? Revolution is the lynch-law of nations; it creates an anarchy, and then organizes its provisional government of momentary despotism. It is a bloody process, but justice does not disdain a rugged road; the desire of all nations comes not always on an ass's colt. All Europe is, just now, in a great ferment; terrible questions are getting ready for a swift tribunal. Injustice cannot stand. No armies, no "Holy Alliance," can hold it up. Human nature is against it; and so is the nature of God! "Justice has feet of wool," no man hears her step, "but her hands are of iron," and where she lays them down, only God can uplift and unclasp. It is vain to trust in wrong: as much of evil so much of loss, is the formula of human history.

I know men complain that sentence against an evil work is not presently executed. They see but half; it is executed, and with speed; every departure from

justice is attended with loss to the unjust man, but the loss is not reported to the public. Sometimes a man is honored as a brave, good man, but trial rings him and he gives an empty, hollow sound. All the ancient and honorable may bid the people trust that man, — they turn off their affections from him.

So have I seen an able man, witty and cunning, graceful, plausible, elegant, and rich; men honored him for a time, tickled by his beauty to eye and ear. But gradually the mean soul of the man appeared in his conduct, selfish, grasping, inhuman, and fraudulently unjust. The public heart forgot him, and when he came to die, the town which once had honored him so much gave him only earth to rest his coffin on. He had the official praises which he paid for, that was all. Silence is a figure of speech, unanswerable, short, cold, but terribly severe.

How differently do men honor such as stood up for truth and right, and never shrank! What monuments the world builds to its patriots! Four great statesmen, organizers of the right, embalmed in stone, look down upon the lawgivers of France as they pass to their hall of legislation, silent orators to tell how nations love the just. What a monument Washington has built in the heart of America and all the world! not by great genius, — he had none of that, — but by his effort to be just. The martyrs of Christendom, of Judaism, and of every form of heathen faith, — how men worship those firm souls who shook off their body sooner than be false to conscience.

Yet eminent justice is often misunderstood. Littleness has its compensation. A small man is seldom pinched for want of room. Greatness is its own torment. There was once a man on this earth whom the world could not understand. He was too high for them,

too wide, was every way too great. He came, the greatest moral genius of our history, to bless mankind. Men mocked him, gave him a gallows between two thieves. "Saviour, save thyself," said they, as they shot out the lip at him. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" was the manly answer to the brutal taunt. Now see how the world avenges its conscience on itself for this injustice: for sixteen hundred years men worship him as God throughout the Western World. His name goes like the morning sun around the earth, like that to waken beauty into life. This conscience of ours is loyal; only let us see the man and know that he is king of righteousness, and we will do him homage all our days.

But we do not see that justice is always done on earth; many a knave is rich, sleek, and honored, while the just man is poor, hated, and in torment. The Silesian merchant fattens on the weavers' tears, and eats their children's bones. Three million slaves earn the enjoyment of Americans, who curse them in the name of Christ; in the North, capital is a tyrant over labor. How sad is the condition of the peasantry of Christendom! The cry of a world of suffering, from mythic Abel to the actual slaves of America, comes up to our ear, and the instinct of justice paints a world beyond the grave, where exact justice shall be done to all and each, to Abel and to Cain. The moral instinct, not satisfied on earth, reaches out to the future world, and in an ideal heaven would realize ideal justice. But even there the tyranny of able-minded men has interfered, painting immortality in such guise that it would be a curse to mankind. Yet the instinct of justice prevails above it all, and few men fear to meet the eternal Mother of us all in heaven.

We need a great and conscious development of the moral element in man, and a corresponding expansion of justice in human affairs; an intentional application thereof to individual, domestic, social, ecclesiastical, and political life. In the old military civilization that was not possible; in the present industrial civilization it is not thought desirable by the mercantile chiefs of Church and State. Hitherto, the actual function of government, so far as it has been controlled by the will of the rulers, has commonly been this, to foster the strong at the expense of the weak, to protect the capitalist and tax the laborer. The powerful have sought a monopoly of development and enjoyment, loving to eat their morsel alone. Accordingly, little respect is paid to absolute justice by the controlling statesmen of the Christian world. Not conscience and the right is appealed to, but prudence and the expedient for to-day. Justice is forgotten in looking at interest, and political morality neglected for political economy; instead of national organization of the ideal right, we have only national housekeeping. Hence come the great evils of civilization at this day, and the questions of humanity, so long adjourned and put off that it seems they can only be settled with bloodshed. Nothing rests secure save in the law of God. The thrones of Christian Europe tremble; a little touch and they fall. Capitalists are alarmed, lest gold ill got should find an equilibrium. Behind the question of royalty, nobility, slavery, — relics of the old feudalism, — there are other questions yet more radical, soon to be asked and answered.

There has been a foolish neglect of moral culture throughout all Christendom. The leading classes have not valued it; with them the mind was thought better than the moral sense, and conscience a dowdy. It is so

in the higher education of New England, as of Europe. These men seek the uses of truth, not truth itself; they scorn duty and its higher law; to be ignorant and weak-minded is thought worse than to be voluntarily unjust and wicked; idiocy of conscience is often thought an excellence, is never out of fashion. Morality is thought no part of piety in the Church, it "saves" no man; "belief" does that with the Protestants, "sacraments" with the Catholics; it is no part of politics in the State, — not needed to save the nation or the soul.

Of late years there has been a great expansion of intellectual development in Europe and America. Has the moral development kept pace with it? Is the desire to apply justice to its universal function as common and intense with the more intellectual classes as the desire to apply special truths to their function? By no means. We have organized our schemes of intellectual culture; it is the function of schools, colleges, learned societies, and all the special institutions for agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, to develop the understanding and apply it to various concrete interests. No analogous pains have been taken with the culture of conscience. France has the only academy for moral science in the Christian world! We have statistical societies for interest, no moral societies for justice. We rely only on the moral instinct; its development is accidental, not a considerable part of our plan; or else is involuntary, no part of the will of the most intellectual class. There is no college for the conscience.

Do the churches accomplish this educational purpose for the moral sense? The popular clergy think miracles better than morality; and have even less justice than truth. They justify the popular sins in the name of God; are the allies of despotism in all its forms,

military or industrial. Oppression by the sword and oppression by capital successively find favor with them. In America there are two common ecclesiastical defences of African slavery: The negroes are the descendants of Ham, who laughed at his father Noah, — overtaken with drink, — and so it is right that Ham's children, four thousand years later, should be slaves to the rest of the world; slavery teaches the black men "our blessed religion." Such is ecclesiastical justice; and hence judge the value of the churches to educate the conscience of mankind! It is strange how little the clergy of Christendom, for fifteen hundred years, have done for the morality of the world; much for decorum, little for justice; a deal for ecclesiastical ceremony, but what for ecclesiastical righteousness? They put worship with the knee before the natural piety of the conscience. "Trusting in good works" is an offence to the Christian Church, as well Protestant as Catholic.

In Europe the consequences of this defect of moral culture have become alarming, even to such as fear only for money. That intellectual culture which was once the cherished monopoly of the rich, has got diffused amongst wide ranks of men, who once sat in the shadow of intellectual darkness. There is no development of conscience to correspond therewith. The Protestant clergy have not enlightened the people on the science of religion. The Catholics had little light to spare, and that was spent in exhibiting "the holy coat of Treves," or images of "the Virgin," and in illuminating cardinals and popes set in the magic-lantern of the great ecclesiastical show-box. No pains, or little, have been taken with the moral culture of the people; none scientifically and for the sake of justice and human kind. So the selfishness of the rich has spread with their intellectual

culture. The few have long demanded a monopoly for themselves, and with their thunder blasted the mortal life of the prophets of justice sent by God to establish peace on earth and good-will amongst men. Now the many begin to demand a monopoly for themselves. Education, wealth, political power, was once a privilege, and they who enjoyed it made this their practical motto: "Down with the poor!" The feudal system fell before Dr. Faustus and his printing-press. Military civilization slowly gives way to industrial. Common schools teach men to read. The steam-press cheapens literature; the complicated tools of modern industry make the shop a college for the understanding; the laborer is goaded by his hate of wrong, which is the passion of morality, as love of right is the affection thereof; — he sees small respect for justice in Church or State. What shall save him from the selfishness about him, long dignified as philosophy, sanctified as religion, and reverenced as the law of God! Do you wonder at "atheism" in Germany; at communism in France? Such "atheism" is the theory of the church made popular; the worst communism is only the principle of monopoly translated out of aristocracy into democracy; the song of the noble in the people's mouth. The hideous cry, "Down with the rich!" — is that an astonishment to the leaders of Europe, who have trod down the poor these thousand years? When ignorance, moral and intellectual stupidity, brought only servile obedience from the vassal, the noble took delight in the oppression which trod his brother down. Now numbers are power; that is the privilege of the people, and if the people, the privileged class of the future, have the selfishness of the aristocracy, what shall save the darling dollars of the rich? "They that laughed at the grovelling worm, and

trod on him, may cry and howl when they see the stoop of the flying and fiery-mouthed dragon!"

The leaders of modern civilization have scorned justice. The chiefs of war, of industry, and the church are joined in a solidarity of contempt; in America, not harlots, so much as politicians, debauch the land. Conscience has been left out of the list of faculties to be intentionally developed in the places of honor. Is it marvellous if men find their own selfishness fall on their own heads? No army of special constables will supply the place of morality in the people. If they do not reverence justice, what shall save the riches of the rich? Ah me! even the dollar flees to the infinite God for protection, and bows before the higher law its worshippers despise.

What moral guidance do the leading classes of men offer the people in either England, — the European or American? Let the laboring men of Great Britain answer; let Ireland, about to perish, groan out her reply; let the three million African slaves bear the report to Heaven. "Ignorance is the mother of devotion," once said some learned fool; monopolists act on the maxim. Ignorance of truth, ignorance of right, — will these be good directors, think you, of the class which has the privilege of numbers and their multitudinous agglomerated power? "Reverence the eternal right," says conscience, "that is moral piety!" "Reap as you sow," quoth human history. Alas for a church without righteousness, and a State without right! All history shows their fate! What is false to justice cannot stand; what is true to that cannot perish. Nothing can save wrong.

A sentence is written against all that is unjust, written by God in the nature of man and the nature of the universe, because it is in the nature of the infinite God.

Fidelity to your faculties, trust in their convictions, that is justice to yourself; a life in obedience thereto, that is justice towards men. Tell me not of successful wrong. The gain of injustice is a loss, its pleasure suffering. Iniquity seems to prosper, but its success is its defeat and shame. The knave deceives himself. The miser, starving his brother's body, starves also his own soul, and at death shall creep out of his great estate of injustice, poor and naked and miserable. Whoso escapes a duty avoids a gain. Outward judgment often fails, inward justice never. Let a man try to love the wrong, and do the wrong, it is eating stones, and not bread; the swift feet of justice are upon him, following with woollen tread, and her iron hands are round his neck. No man can escape from this — no more than from himself.

At first sight of the consequences of justice redressing the evils of the world, its aspect seems stern and awful. Men picture the palace of this king as hell: there is torment and anguish; the waters are in trouble. The chariot of justice seems a car of Juggernaut crushing the necks of men; they cry for mercy. But look again; the sternness all is gone; nothing is awful there; the palace of justice is all heaven, as before a hell; the water is troubled only by an angel, and to heal the sick; the fancied car of Juggernaut is the triumphal chariot of mankind riding forth to welfare. With swift and noiseless feet justice follows the transgressor and clutches the iron hand about his neck; it was to save him that she came with swift and noiseless tread. This is the angel of God that flies from east to west, and where she stoops her broad wings it is to bring the counsel of God, and feed mankind with angels' bread. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, from her own beak to feed its young, broods over their callow frame, and bears them

on her wings, teaching them first to fly, so comes justice unto men.

Sometimes men fear that justice will fail, wickedness appears so strong. On its side are the armies, the thrones of power, the riches, and the glory of the world. Poor men crouch down in despair. Shall justice fail and perish out from the world of men? shall anything that is wrong continually endure? When attraction fails out of the world of matter, when God fails and there is no God, then shall justice fail, then shall wrong be able continually to endure; not till then.

The unity of the material world is beautiful, kept by attraction's universal force; temperance in the body has fair effects, and wisdom in the mind. The face of nature, how fair it is; the face of strong and healthy, beauteous manhood is a dear thing to look upon. To intellectual eyes, the countenance of truth has a majestic charm. Wise men, with cultivated mind, understanding, imagination, reason well developed, discovering and disclosing truth and beauty to mankind, are a fair spectacle. But I love the moral side of Deity yet more; love God as justice. His justice, our morality working with that, shall one day create a unity amongst all men more fair than the face of nature, and add a wondrous beauty, wondrous happiness, to this great family of men. Will you fear lest a wrong should prove immortal? So far as anything is false or wrong it is weak; so far as true and right, is omnipotently strong. Never fear that a just thought shall fail to be a thing; the power of God, the wisdom of God, and the justice of God are on its side, and it cannot fail, — no more than God himself can perish. Wrong is the accident of human development. Right is of the substance of humanity, justice the goal we are to reach.

But in human affairs the justice of God must work by human means. Men are the measures of God's principles; our morality the instrument of his justice, which stilleth alike the waves of the sea, the tumult of the people, and the oppressor's brutal laugh. Justice is the idea of God, the ideal of man, the rule of conduct writ in the nature of mankind. The ideal must become actual, God's thought a human thing, made real in a reign of righteousness, and a kingdom — no, a commonwealth — of justice on the earth. You and I can help forward that work. God will not disdain to use our prayers, our self-denial, and the little atoms of justice that personally belong to us, to establish his mighty work, — the development of mankind.

You and I may work with him, and as on the floor of the Pacific Sea little insects lay the foundation of firm islands, slowly uprising from the tropic wave, — the ocean working with their humble toil, — so you and I in our daily life, in house, or field, or shop, obscurely faithful, may prepare the way for the republic of righteousness, the democracy of justice that is to come. Our own morality shall bless us here, — not in our outward life alone, but in the inward and majestic life of conscience. All the justice we mature shall bless us here, yea, and hereafter; but at our death we leave it added to the common store of humankind. Even the crumbs that fall from our table may save a brother's life. You and I may help deepen the channel of human morality in which God's justice runs, and the wrecks of evil, which now check the stream, be borne off the sooner by the strong, all-conquering tide of right, the river of God that is full of blessing.

OF THE CULTURE OF THE RELIGIOUS POWERS.

Let us go on unto perfection. — Heb. vi. 1.

THE highest product of a nation is its men; of you and me is our character, the life which we make out of our time. Our reputation is what we come to be thought of, our character what we come to be. In this character the most important element is the religious, for it is to be the guide and director of all the rest, the foundation-element of human excellence.

In general our character is the result of three factors, namely, of our nature, both that which is human, and which we have as men in common with all mankind, and that which is individual and which we have as Sarah or George, in distinction from all men; next, of the educational forces about us; and, finally, of our own will, which we exercise, and so determine the use we make of the two other factors; for it is for us to determine whether we will lie flat before natural instincts and educational forces, or modify their action upon us.

What is true in general of all culture is true in special of religious education. Religious character is the result of these three factors.

I suppose every earnest man, who knows what religion is, desires to become a religious man, to do the most of religious duty, have the most of religious rights, and enjoy the most of religious welfare; to give the most for God, and receive the most from him. It does not always appear so, yet really is. At the bottom of our

hearts we all wish for that. We have been misled by blind guides, who did not always mean to deceive us; we have often gone astray, led off by our instinctive passion in youth, our voluntary calculation in manhood, yet never meaning to deceive ourselves. But there is none of us who does not desire to be a religious man, — at least, I never met one who confessed it, or of whom I thought it true. But of course, they desire it with various degrees of will.

Writers often divide men into two classes, saints and sinners. I like not the division. The best men are bad enough in their own eyes. I hope God is better pleased with men than we are with ourselves, there are so many things in us all which are there against our consent, — evil tenants whom we cannot get rid of as yet. That smoky chimney of an ill-temper is a torment to poor Mr. Fiery, which he has not had courage or strength to remove in fifty winters. To "see ourselves as others see us," would often minister to pride and conceit; how many naughty things, actions and emotions too, I know of myself, which no calumniator ever casts in my teeth. Yet take the worst men whom you can find, — men that rob on the highway with open violence, pirates on the sea, the more dangerous thieves who devour widows' houses and plunder the unprotected in a manner thoroughly legal, respectable, and "Christian," men that steal from the poor; — take the tormentors of the Spanish Inquisition, assassins and murderers from New York and Naples, nay, the family of commissioners who in Boston are willing to kidnap their fellow-citizens for ten dollars a head, and bind them and their posterity for the perennial torture of American slavery; — even these men would curl and shudder at the thought of being without consciousness of God in the world; of living

without any religion, and dying without any religion. I know some think religion is rather uncomfortable to live by, but the worst of men, as the best, thinks it is a good thing to die with. Men repent of many things on a death-bed; when the storm blows, all the dead bodies are stirred in the bosom of the sea, and no one is then sorry for his efforts to become a religious man. Many a man, who lives in the violation of his personal, domestic, social, national, and general human duties, doubtless contrives to think he is a religious man, and if in the name of Mammon he robs the widow of a pound, he gives a penny to the orphan in the name of God, and thinks he serves each without much offending the other. Thus, kidnappers in these times are "exemplary members" of "Christian churches," where philanthropy gets roundly rated by the minister from week to week, and call themselves "miserable offenders" with the devoutest air. This is not all sham. The men want to keep on good terms with God, and take this as the cheapest, as well as the most respectable way. Louis the Fifteenth had a private chapel dedicated to the "Blessed Virgin" in the midst of his house of debauchery, where he and his poor victims were said to be "very devout after the Church fashion." Slave-traders and kidnappers take pains to repel all calumny from their "religious" reputation, and do not practise their craft till "divines" assure them it is patriarchal and even "Christian." I mention these things to show that men who are commonly thought eminently atrocious in their conduct and character, yet would not willingly be without religion. I shall take it for granted that all men wish to acquire a religious character.

I take it this is the idea of a religious character. It is, first, to be faithful to ourselves, to rule body and

spirit, each by the natural law thereof; to use, develop, and enjoy all the faculties, each in its just proportions, all in harmonious action, developed to the greatest degree which is possible under our circumstances; to have such an abiding consciousness of God, that you will have the fourfold form of piety, so often dwelt on before, and be inwardly blameless, harmonious, and holy.

It is, next, to be faithful to your fellow-men, — to do for them what is right, from right motives and for right ends; to love them as yourself; to be useful to them to the extent of your power; to live in such harmony with them that you shall rejoice in their joys, and all be mutually blessed with the bliss of each other.

It is also to be faithful to God, — to know of him, to have a realizing sense of his infinite power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and holiness, and so a perfect love of God, a perfect trust in him, a delight in the infinite being of God; to love him intellectually in the love of truth, morally as justice, affectionally as love, and totally as the infinite God, — Father and Mother too of all this world; so to love God that you have no desire to transcend his law or violate your duty to yourself, your brother, or your God; so to love him that there shall be no fear of God, none for yourself, none for mankind, but a perfect confidence and an absolute love shall take the place of every fear. In short, it is to serve God by the normal use, development, and enjoyment of every faculty of the spirit, every limb of the body, and every mode of power which we possess.

I think such is the ideal of a religious character; that there is no one who would not confess a desire to be religious in that sense, for it is to be a perfect man; no one who would not make some sacrifice for this end; most men would make a great one; some would leave

father and mother, and lay down their own lives to secure it.

What are some of the means to this end, to this grace, and this glory? There are four great public educational forces, — namely, the industrial, political, literary, and ecclesiastical action of the people, represented by the Business, the State, the Press, and the Church. These have a general influence in the formation of the character, and so a special influence in the formation of the religious character; but as they cannot be trusted for the general work of forming the character, no more can they for this special function. They are less reliable in religion than in any other matter whatever. By these forces the whole community is a teacher of religion to all persons born therein; but it can only teach the mode and degree of religion it has itself learned and possessed, not that which it has not learned and does not possess. Not only can it not teach a religion higher than its own, but it hinders you in your attempt to learn a new and better mode of religion.

For several things we may trust these public educational forces in religion.

They teach you in the general popular fear of God, and a certain outward reverence which comes of that, — the popular sacraments of our time, — to give your bodily presence in a meeting-house, perhaps to join a sectarian church, and profess great reverence for the Bible.

They will teach you the popular part of your practical duties, — personal, domestic, social, ecclesiastical, and political. But of course they can teach you only the popular part.

They may be relied on to teach the majority of men certain great truths, which are the common property of Christendom, — such as the existence of a God, the im-

mortality of the soul, the certainty of a kind of retribution, and the like. Then each sect has certain truths of its own which it will commonly teach. Thus the Catholics will learn to reverence the Roman Church; the Protestants to venerate the Bible; the Calvinists to believe in the Trinity, and the Unitarians in the Oneness of God. All the sects will teach a certain decorum, — the observance of Sunday, to honor the popular virtues, to shun the unpopular vices.

The educational forces tend to produce this effect. You send your boys to the public schools of Boston, they learn the disciplines taught there, — to read, write, and calculate. What is not taught they do not learn. In Saxony the children learn German, Dutch in Holland. In the same way the majority of men learn the common religion of the community, and profess it practically in their markets, their houses, their halls of legislature, their courts, and their jails. The commercial newspapers, the proceedings of Congress, the speeches of public men, — these are a part of the national profession of faith, and show what is the actual object of worship, and what the practical creed of the nation.

But for any eminence of religion you must look elsewhere, — for any excellence of the sentiment, any superiority of the idea, any newness in the form of religion. These educational forces will teach you evanescent principles which seem to suit your present and partial interests, not eternal principles, which really suit your universal and everlasting interests. In Jerusalem these forces might educate a Gamaliel, — never a Jesus.

Charles River flows two miles an hour; chips and straws on its surface, therefore, if there be no wind, will float with that velocity. But if a man in a boat wishes to go ten miles an hour, he must row eight miles more

than the stream will carry him. So we are all in the dull current of the popular religion, and may trust it to drift us as fast as it flows itself; we may rise with its flood, and be stranded and left dry when it ebbs out before some popular wickedness which blows from off the shore. The religious educational forces of a commercial town,—you see in the newspapers what religion they will teach you; in the streets, what men they would make.

These educational forces tend to make average Christians, and their influence is of great value to the community, — like the discipline of a camp. But to be eminent religious men we must depend on very different helps. Let us look at some of them.

There are religious men who, by the religious genius they were born to, and the religious use they have made thereof, have risen far above the average of Christians. Such men are the first help; and a most important one they are. It is a fortunate thing when such an one stands in a church whither the public current drives in the people, and to the strength of his nature adds the strength of position. But it is not often that such a man stands in a pulpit. The common ecclesiastical training tends to produce dull and ordinary men, with little individual life, little zeal, and only the inspiration of a sect. However, if a man of religious genius, by some human accident, gets into a pulpit, he is in great danger of preaching himself out of it. Still there are such men, a few of them, stationed along the line of the human march; cities set on a hill, which no cloud of obloquy can wholly hide from sight. Nay, they are great beacons on the shore of the world, — light-houses on the headlands of the coast, sending their guidance far out to sea, to warn the mariner of his whereabouts,

and welcome him to port and peace. Street-lamps there must be for the thoroughfares of the town, shop-lights also for the grocer and the apothecary; nay, hand-lights which are made to be carried from room to room and set down anywhere, and numerous they will ever be, each having its own function. This arrangement takes place in the ecclesiastical as well as in municipal affairs, for each sect has its street-lamps and its shop-lights to guide men to its particular huckstery of salvation, and little hand-lights to take into corners where the salesmen and the showmen are all ready with their wares. But the great Faros of Genoa, and Eddystone light-houses of religion, must always be few and far between; the world is not yet rich enough in spirit to afford many of this sort.

Yet even in these men you seldom find the wholeness of religion. One has the sentiments thereof; he will kindle your religious feelings, your reverence, your devotion, your trust, and your love of God.

Another has only its ideas, — new thoughts about religion, new truths, which he presents to the minds of men. Analytic, he destroys the ancient errors of theological systems, thrashes the creeds of the churches with the stout flail of philosophy, and sifts them as wheat, winnowing with a rough wind; great clouds of chaff blow off before his mighty vans. Synthetic, he takes the old truth which stood the critical thrashing and is now winnowed clean; he joins therewith new truth shot down from God, and welcomed into loving arms; and out of his large storehouse this scribe, well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, brings forth things new and old, to serve as bread for the living, and seed-corn to generations not born as yet.

A third, with no eminence of feelings commonly

called religious, — none of theological ideas, — will have yet an eminence of justice, and teach personal and social morality as no other man. He may turn to a single specialty of morals, and demand temperance, chastity, the reform of penal law, the reconstruction of society, the elevation of woman, and the education of the whole mass of men; or he may turn to general philanthropy, the universality of moral excellence, — it all comes from the same root, and with grateful welcome should be received.

Each of these teachers will do real service to your souls, — quickening the feelings, imparting ideas, and organizing the results of religion in moral acts. I know a great outcry has been made in all the churches against moral reformers, against men who would apply pure religion to common life, in the special or the universal form. You all know what clamor is always raised against a man who would abolish a vice from human society, or establish a new virtue. Every wolf is interested in the wilderness, and hates the axe and the plough of the settler, and would devour his child if he dared. So every nuisance in society has its supporters, whose property is invested therein. Paul found it so at Ephesus, Telemachus at Rome, and Garrison in America. I doubt not the men of Ephesus thought religion good in all matters except the making of silver shrines for Diana; "there it makes men mad." Men cry out against the advance of morality; "Preach us religion; preach us Christianity, Christ and him crucified, and not this infidel matter of ending particular sins, and abounding in special virtues. Preach us the exceeding sinfulness of sin, 'original sin,' 'which brought death into the world and all our woe;' preach the beauty of holiness and the like of that, and let alone the

actual sins of society, of the shop and the church and the State; — be silent about drunkenness and lust, about war, slavery, and the thousand forms of avarice which we rejoice in. Is it not enough, O preacher, that we give you of our purse and our corporeal presence, that we weekly confess ourselves 'miserable offenders,' with 'no health in us,' and fast, perhaps, twice in our lives, but you must convict us of being idolaters also; yea, drunkards, gluttons, impure in youth and avaricious in manhood, — once a voluptuary, and now a hunker! Go to now, and preach us the blessedness of the righteous, Christ and him crucified!" When money speaks the church obeys, and the pulpit preaches for doctrine the commandments of the pews.

But it is these very moral reformers, who, in our time, have done more than all others to promote the feeling of piety which the churches profess so much to covet. The new ground of religion which the churches occupy is always won for them by men whom the churches hated. In the last thirty years these "pestilent moral reformers" of New England, I think, have done more to promote love of God, and faith in him, than all the other preachers of all the churches. Justice is a part of piety and such is the instinctive love of wholeness in man, that all attempts to promote justice amongst men lead ultimately to the love of God as God.

In every community you will find a man who thus represents some portion of religion, — often, perhaps, thinking that part is the whole, because it is all that he knows; here and there we find such an one in the pulpit. But now and then there comes a man who unites these three functions of piety into one great glory of religion, — is eminent in feelings, ideas, and actions not

the less. Each of those partial men may help us much, teaching his doctrine, kindling our feelings, giving example of his deed, and laying out religious work for us, spreading his pattern before society. Each of these may help us to a partial improvement. But when a man comes who unites them all, he will give us a new start, an inspiration which no other man can give; not partial, but total.

There are always some such men in the world; the seed of the prophets never dies out. It comes up in Israel and in Attica, — here a prophet teaching truth as divine inspiration, there a philosopher with his human discovery. So the herb of grace springs up in corners where once old houses stood, or wherever the winds have borne the seed; and, cropped by the oxen, and trodden with their feet, it grows ever fresh and ever new. When Scribes and Pharisees become idolaters at Jerusalem, and the sheep without a shepherd

> "Look up and are not fed,
> But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,
> Rot inwardly and foul contagion spread,"

the spirit of God comes newly down on some carpenter's son at Nazareth, whose lightning terrifies the non-conducting Scribe; the new encounters the perishable old, and all heaven rings with the thunder of the collision. Now and then such a person comes to stand betwixt the living and the dead. "Bury that," quoth he, "it is hopelessly dead, past all resurrection. This must be healed, tended, and made whole." He is a physician to churches sick of sin, as well as with it; burying the dead, he heals also the sick, and quickens the sound into new and healthy life. But the owners of swine that perish must needs cry out at the loss.

Yet such a man is not understood in his own generation. A man with a single eminent faculty is soon seen through and comprehended. This man is good for nothing but practice; that, only for thought. One is a sentimentalist; another a traveller. But when a genius comes eminent in many and most heterogeneous faculties, men do not see through nor comprehend him in a short time. If he has in himself all the excellence of all the men in the metropolis, — why, it will take many a great city to comprehend him. The young maiden in the story, for the first time hearing her clerical lover preach, wondered that those lips could pray as sweetly as they kissed, but could not comprehend the twofold sacrament, the mystery of this double function of a single mouth. Anybody can see that corn grows in this field, and kale in that; the roughest clown knows this, but it takes a great many wise men to describe the botany of a whole continent. So is it ever. Here is a religious man, — writing on purely internal emotions of piety, of love of God, of faith in him, of rest for the soul, the foretaste of heaven. He penetrates the deeps of religious joy, its peace enters his soul, his morning prayer is a psalm deeper than David's, with a beauty more various than the poetic wreath which the shepherd-king gathered from the hill-sides of Jordan or the gardens of Mount Zion. Straightway men say: "This man is a sentimentalist; he is a mystic, all contemplation, all feeling, — poetical, dreamy, — his light is moon-shine." But ere long our sentimentalist writes of philosophy, and his keen eye sees mines of wisdom not quarried heretofore, and he brings a power of unsunned gold to light. Other men say: "Oh, this man is nothing but a philosopher, a mere thinker, a mighty head, but with no more heart than Chimborazo or Thomas Hobbes." Yet presently some great sin breaks

out, and rolls its desolating flood over the land, uprooting field and town, and our philosopher goes out to resist the ruin. He denounces the evil, attacks the institution which thus deceives men. Straightway men call out: "Iconoclast! Boanerges! John Knox! destroyer!" and the like. Alas me! men do not know that the same sun gathers the dews which water the forget-me-not, drooping at noon-day, and drives through the sky the irresistible storm that shatters the forest in its thunderous march, and piles the ruins of a mountain in an Alpine avalanche. The same soul which thundered its forked lightning on Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, poured out poetic parables from his golden urn, spreading forth the sunshine of the beatitudes upon friend and foe, and, half in heaven, breathed language wholly thence, — "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It is a great thing once in our days to meet with a man of religious genius largely developed into lovely life. He stirs the feelings infinite within us, and we go off quite other than we came. He has not put his soul into our bosom; he has done better, — has waked our soul in our own bosom. Men may go leagues long to listen to such a man, and come back well paid. He gives us seeds of future life for our little garden. So the husbandman journeys far to get a new root or a new seed, to fill his ground with beauty or his home with bread. After we have listened to the life of such a man, the world does not seem so low, nor man so mean; heaven looks nearer, yet higher too; humanity is more rich; if wrong appear yet more shameful, the wrongdoer is not so hopeless. After that I can endure trouble; my constant cross is not so heavy; the unwonted is less difficult to bear. Tears are not so scalding to

an eye which has looked through them into the serene face of a great-souled man. Men seem friendlier, and God is exceeding dear. The magistrates of Jerusalem marvelled at the conduct of Peter and John, heedful of the higher law of God, spite of bonds and imprisonment and politicians; but they "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus," and the marvel had its explanation. What a dull, stupid thing is a candle! Touch it with fire, and then look! We are all of us capable of being lit when some Prometheus comes down with the spark of God in his right hand. The word of Jesus touched the dull fishermen of Galilee, and they flamed into martyrs and apostles.

It is a great thing to meet such a man once in your lifetime, to be cheered and comforted in your sad wayfaring, and filled with new vigor and new faith in the Father of all. After that we thank God, and take courage and fare on our happier way. So a company of pilgrims journeying in the wilderness, dry, foot-sore, and hot, the water all spent in their goat-skins, their camels weary and sick, come to a grove of twelve palm-trees, and an unexpected spring of pure water wells up in the desert. Straightway their weariness is all forgot, their limping camels have become whole once more. Staying their thirst, they fill their bottles also with the cool refreshment, rest in the shadow from the noonday's heat, and then with freshened life, the soreness gone from every bone, pursue their noiseless and their happy march. Even so, says the Old Testament story, God sent his angel down in the wilderness to feed Elias with the bread of heaven, and in the strength thereof the prophet went his forty days, nor hungered not. I suppose some of us have had this experience, and in our time of bewilderment, of scorching desolation, and of

sorrow, have come upon our well of water and twelve palm-trees in the sand, and so have marched all joyful through the wilderness. Elias left all the angels of God for you and me, — the friendlier for his acquaintance.

There is a continual need of men of this stamp. We live in the midst of religious machinery. Many mechanics at piety, often only apprentices and slow to learn, are turning the various ecclesiastical mills, and the creak of the motion is thought "the voice of God." You put into the hopper a crowd of persons, young and old, and soon they are ground out into the common run of Christians, sacked up, and stored away for safe-keeping in the appropriate bins of the great ecclesiastical establishment, and labelled with their party names. You look about in what is dryly called "the religious world." What a mass of machinery is there, of dead timber, not green trees! what a jar and discord of iron clattering upon iron! Action is of machinery, not of life, and it is green new life that you want. So men grow dull in their churches. What a weariness is an ordinary meeting on one of the fifty-two ordinary Sundays of the year! What a dreary thing is an ordinary sermon of an ordinary minister! He does not wish to preach it; the audience does not wish to hear it. So he makes a feint of preaching, they a feint of hearing him preach. But he preaches not; they hear not. He is dull as the cushion he beats, they as the cushions they cover. A body of men met in a church for nothing, and about nothing, and to hear nobody, is to me a ghastly spectacle. Did you ever see cattle in a cold day in the country crowd together in an enclosure, the ground frozen under their feet, and no hay spread upon it, — huddling together for warmth, hungry, but inactive, because penned up, and waiting with the heavy, slumberous patience of oxen till

some man should come and shake down to them a truss of clean bright hay, still redolent of clover and honeysuckle? That is a cheerful sight; and when the farmer comes and hews their winter food out of the stack, what life is in these slumberous oxen! their venerable eyes are full of light, because they see their food. Ah me! how many a herd of men is stall-hungered in the churches, not getting even the hay of religion, only a little chaff swept off from old thrashing-floors whence the corn which great men beat out of its husk was long since gathered up to feed and bless mankind! Churches are built of stone. I have often thought pulpits should be cushioned with husks.

Of all melancholy social sights that one sees, few are so sad as a body of men got together to convert mankind to sectarianism by ecclesiastical machinery, — men dead as timber, cut down, dead and dry! Out of wire, muslin, thread, starch, gum, and sundry chemicals, French milliners make by dozens what they call roses, lilies of the valley, forget-me-nots, and the like. Scentless and seedless abortions are they, and no more. What a difference between the flower the lover gathers by the brook-side for his maiden's breast, and the thing which the milliner makes with her scissors; between the forget-me-not of the meadow and the forget-me-not of the shop! Such an odds is there betwixt religious men and Christians manufactured in a mill.

In the factories of England you find men busy all their life in making each the twenty-sixth part of a watch. They can do nothing else, and become almost as much machines as the grindstone which sharpens their drill, or the rammage which carries their file. Much of our ecclesiastical machinery tends to make men into mere fixtures in a mill. So there must be

a continual accession of new religious life from without into the churches to keep Christians living. Men of religious genius it is who bring it in. Without them "religion" in cities would become mere traditional theology, and "life in God" would be sitting in a meeting-house, and the baptism in water from an aqueduct taken for the communion of the Holy Ghost. Blessed be God that there are such men not smothered in the surplice of the priest, but still alive in God, and God alive in them!

In old towns all the water that fills the wells is dead water, — dead and dirty too; the rinsings of the streets, the soakings of stables, the slop of markets, the wash and offscouring of the town; even the filterings of the graveyard settle therein, and the child is fed with its grandsire's bones. Men would perish if left alone, dying of their drink. So, far off in the hills, above the level of the town, they seek some mountain lake, and furnish a pathway that its crystal beauty may come to town. There the living water leaps up in public fountains, it washes the streets, it satisfies the blameless cattle, it runs into every house to cleanse and purify and bless, and men are glad as the Hebrews when Moses smote the fabled rock. So comes religious genius unto men; some mountain of a man stands up tall, and all winter long takes the snows of heaven on his shoulders, all summer through he receives the cold rain into his bosom; both become springs of living water at his feet. Then the proprietors of fetid wells and subterranean tanks, which they call "Bethesda," though often troubled by other than angels, and whence they retail their "salvation" a pennyworth at a time, — they cry out with sneer and scoff and scorn against our new-born saint. "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" quoth they.

"Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Who are you?" Thus the man of forms has ever his calumny against the man of God.

Religious teachers there will ever be, — a few organizers, many an administrator of organizations; but inventors in religion are always few. These are the greatest external helps to the manhood of religion. All great teaching is the teacher's inspiration; this is truer in religion than in aught besides, for here all is life, and nothing a trick of mechanism. Let us take all the good that we can gain from the rare men of religious genius, but never submit and make even them our lords; teachers ever, let them never be masters.

Then there are religious books, such as waken the soul by their direct action, — stirring us to piety, stirring us to morality, — books in which men of great religious growth have garnered up the experience of their life. Some of them are total, — for all religion; some partial, for the several specialities thereof. These books are sacks of corn carried from land to land, to be sown and bear manifold their golden fruit. There are not many such in the world. There are few masterpieces of poetry in all the earth; a boy's school-bag would hold them all, from Greece and Rome, Italy, Germany, England. The masterpieces of piety in literature are the rarest of all. In a mineralogist's cabinet what bushels there are of quartz, mica, hornblende, slate, and coal; and common minerals by heaps; reptiles and fishes done in stone; only here and there an emerald; and diamonds are exceeding rare. So is it with gems of holy thought. Some psalms are there from the Bible, though seldom a whole one that is true to the soul of man, — now and then an

oracle from a Hebrew prophet, full of faith in God, a warrior of piety, — which keep their place in the cabinet of religion, though two or three thousand years have passed by since their authors ceased to be mortal. But the most quickening of all religious literature is still found in the first three Gospels of the New Testament, — in those dear beatitudes, in occasional flowers of religion, parable and speech. The beatitudes will outlast the pyramids. Yet the New Testament and its choicest texts must be read with the caution of a free-born man. Even in the words of Jesus of Nazareth much is merely Hebrew, — marked with the limitations of the nation and the man.

Other religious books there are precious to the heart of man. Some of the works of Augustine, of Thomas à Kempis, of Fénelon, of Jeremy Taylor, of John Bunyan, of William Law, have proved exceeding dear to pious men throughout the Christian world. In a much narrower circle of readers, Buckminster, Channing, and Ware have comforted the souls of men. Herbert and Watts have here and there a "gem of purest ray serene," and now and then a flower blooms into beauty in the desert air of liturgies, breviaries, and collections of hymns. The religious influence of Wordsworth's poetry has been truly great. With no large poetic genius, often hemmed in by the narrowness of his traditionary creed and the puerile littleness of men about him, he had yet an exceeding love of God, which ran over into love of men, and beautified his every day; and many a poor girl, many a sad boy, has been cheered and lifted up in soul and sense by the brave piety in his sonnets and in his lyric sweeps of lofty song. A writer of our own time, with large genius and unfaltering piety, adorning a little village of New England with his fragrant life, has sent

a great religious influence to many a house in field and town, and youths and maids rejoice in his electric touch. I will leave it to posterity to name his name,—the most original, as well as religious, of American writers.

But the great vice of what is called "religious literature" is this. It is the work of narrow-minded men, sectarians, and often bigots, who cannot see beyond their own little partisan chapel,—men who know little of anything, less of man, and least of all of real religion. What criticism do such men make on noble men? The criticism of an oyster on a thrush; nay, sometimes, of a toad "ugly and venomous," with no "jewel in its head," upon a nightingale. Literature of that character is a curse. In the name of God it misleads common men from religion, and it makes powerful men hate religion itself,—at least hate its name. It bows weak men down till they tremble and fear all their mortal life. I lack words to express my detestation of this trash,—concocted of sectarian cant and superstitious fear. I tremble when I think of the darkness it spreads over human life, of the disease which it inoculates mankind withal, and the craven dread it writes out upon the face of its worshippers. Look at the history of the Athanasian Creed and the Westminster Catechism. They have done more, it seems to me, to retard the religious development of Christendom than all the ribald works of confessed infidels, from Lucian, the king of scoffers, down to our own days. . . .

Some books on religious matters are the work of able men, men well disciplined, but yet contaminated with false views of God, of man, and of the relation between the two; with false views of life, of death, and of the next, eternal world. Such men were Baxter and Ed-

wards and many more,—Protestant and Catholic, Christian, Hebrew, Buddhist, and Mahometan. All these books should be read with caution and distrust. Still a wise man, with a religious spirit, in the religious literature of the world, from Confucius to Emerson, may find much to help his growth.

After the attainment of manlier years in piety, other works, not intentionally religious, will help a man greatly. Books of science, which show the thought of God writ in the world of matter; books of history, which reveal the same mind in the development of the human race, slow, but as constant and as normal as the growth of a cedar or the disclosing of an egg; Newton and Laplace, Descartes and Kant, indirectly, through their science, stir devout souls to deeper devotion. A thoughtful man dissolves the matter of the universe, leaving only its forces; dissolves away the phenomena of human history, leaving only immortal spirit; he studies the law, the mode of action, of these forces, and this spirit, which make up the material and the human world; and I see not how he can fail to be filled with reverence, with trust, with boundless love of the infinite God who devised these laws of matter and of mind, and thereby bears up this marvellous universe of things and men. Science also has its New Testament. The beatitudes of philosophy are profoundly touching; in the exact laws of matter and of mind the great Author of the world continually says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The study of nature is another great help to the cultivation of religion. Familiarity with the grass and the trees teaches us deeper lessons of love and trust than we can glean from the writings of Fénelon and Augustine. What lessons did Socrates, Jesus, and Luther, learn

from the great Bible of God, ever open before mankind! It is only indirectly that He speaks in the sight of a city, — the brick garden with diœcious fops for flowers. But in the country all is full of God, and the eternal flowers of heaven seem to shed sweet influence on the perishable blossoms of the earth. Nature is full of religious lessons to a thoughtful man. The great sermon of Jesus was preached on a mountain, which preached to him as he to the people, and his figures of speech were first natural figures of fact. But the religious use to be made of natural objects would require a sermon of itself.

The great reliance for religious growth must not be on anything external; not on the great and living souls whom God sends, rarely, to the earth, to water the dry ground with their eloquence, and warm it with their human love; nor must it be on the choicest gems of religious thought, wherein saints and sages have garnered up their life and left it for us. We cannot rely on the beauty or the power of outward nature to charm our wandering soul to obedience and trust in God. These things may jostle us by the elbow when we read, warn us of wandering, or of sloth, and open the gate, but we must rely on ourselves for entering in. By the aid of others and our own action we must form the ideal of a religious man, of what we ought to be and do, under our peculiar circumstances. To form this personal ideal, and fit ourselves thereto, requires an act of great earnestness on our part. It is not a thing to be done in an idle hour. It demands the greatest activity of the mightiest mode of mind. But what a difference there is between men in earnestness of character! Do you understand the "religion" of a frivolous man? With him it is all a trifle; the fashion of his religion is of less concern

than the fashion of his hat or of the latchet of his shoes. He asks not for truth, for justice, for love, — asks not for God, cares not. The great sacrament of religious life is to him less valuable than a flask of Rhenish wine broke on a jester's head. The specific levity of these men appears in their relation to religion. The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God." Quoth the fop in his waistcoat, "What if there be none? What is that to me? Let us dance and be silly!" Did you ever see a frivolous man and maid in love, — so they called it? I have: it was like putting on a new garment of uncertain fit; and the giving and the taking of what was called a "heart" was like buying a quantity of poison weed to turn to empty smoke. They were "fearfully and wonderfully made for each other." So have I seen a silly man give a bad coin to a beggar in the streets.

I know there are those whose practical religion is only decency. They have no experience of religion but the hiring of a seat in a church where pew and pulpit both invite to sleep, — whose only sacrifice is their pew-tax; their single sacrament but bodily presence in a church. There are meeting-houses full of such men, which ecclesiastical upholsterers have furnished with pulpit and pew and priest, objects of pity to men with human hearts!

When an earnest young man offers a woman his heart and his life and his love, asking her for her heart and her life and her love, it is no easy hour to man or maid. The thought of it takes the rose out of the young cheek, gives a new lustre to the eye which has a deeper and mysterious look, and a terrible throbbing to the heart. For so much depends upon a word that forms or else misshapes so much in life, and soul and sense are clamoring for their right. The past comes up to help

create the future, and all creation is new before the lover's eye, and all

> "The floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold."

So is it in some great hour when an earnest man holds communion with himself, seeking to give and take with God, and asks, "What ought I in my life to be and do?" Depend upon it, only to the vulgarest of men is it a common hour. I will not say that every earnest man has his one enamoured hour of betrothing himself to religion. Some have this sudden experience, and give themselves to piety as they espouse a bride found when not looked for, and welcomed with a great swelling of the heart and prophetic bloomings of the yearning soul. Others go hand in hand therewith as brother and sister, through all their early days in amiable amity which sin has never broke and seldom jarred; and so the wedlock of religion is as the acquaintance which began in babyhood, was friendship next at home and school, and slowly under tranquil skies grew up and blossomed out at last to love. This is the common way, — an ascent without a sudden leap. If bred as religious children, you grow up religious men. But under the easiest of discipline, I think, every earnest man has his time of trial and of questioning, when he asks himself, "Shall I serve the soul by a life of piety; or shall I only serve the flesh, listing in the popular armada of worldliness to do battle in that leprous host?" That, I say, is a time of trial.

Let us suppose some earnest man forms the true ideal of religion, — of his duty to himself, his brother, and his God. He is next to observe and attend to himself, making his prayer a practice, and his ideal dream an actual day of life. Here he is to watch and scan himself, to see what causes help, and what hinder him in

his religious growth. We have different dispositions, all of us; what tempts one, is nothing to another man; every heart knows only its own bitterness, not also that of another. Let me know my weak points and my strong ones; forewarned, I shall be then forearmed. This man in the period of passion is led off by the lusts of the body; that in the period of calculation is brought into yet greater peril by his ambition, — his love of riches, place, and the respect of men. The Devil rings a dollar in one man's ear; he dreams of money every day. Some sensual lust catches another, as flies with poisoned sweet. To speak mythologically, the Devil has different baits to lure his diverse prey. Love of applause strips this man of his conscience, his affection, and his self-respect, of his regard for God, and drives him naked through a dirty world. Let a man know in what guise the tempter comes, and when, and he will not suffer his honor to be broken through. For this purpose, in the earlier period of life, or later when placed in positions of new peril, it is well to ask at the close of every day, "What have I done that is wrong, — what have I said, or thought, or felt? What that is right?" It is well thus to orient yourself before your idea and your God, and see if there be any evil thing in you. This is needful until the man has gained complete possession of every limb of his body and of each faculty of his spirit, and can use them each after its own law in his particular position. Then he will do right with as little trouble as he walks about his daily work. His life will sanctify itself.

Do you know how artists make their great pictures? First, they form the idea. It is a work of sweat and watching. The man assembles all the shapes of beauty and of power which he has ever seen, or thought, or fancied, or felt. They flash along before his quickened

eye, wildered and wandering now. New forms of beauty spring into life at the bidding of his imagination, — so flowers at touch of spring. Ere long he has his idea, composite, gathered from many a form of partial beauty, and yet one; a new creation never seen before. Thus in his seething mind Phidias smelts the several beauty of five hundred Spartan maids into his one Pallas-Athena, born of *his* head this time, a grand eclecticism of loveliness. So Michael devised his awful form of God creating in the Vatican; and Raphael his dear Cecilia, sweetest of pictured saints, — so fair, she drew the angels down to see her sing, and ears were turned to eyes. Now the artist has formed his idea. But that is not all. Next, he must make the idea that is in his mind a picture in the eyes of men; his personal fiction must become a popular fact. So he toils over this new work for many a weary day, and week, and month, and year, with penitential brush oft painting out what once amiss he painted in, — for even art has its error, the painter's sin, and so its remorse; the artist is made wiser by his own defeat. At last his work stands there complete, — the holy queen of art. Genius is the father, of a heavenly line; but the mortal mother, that is industry.

Now as an artist, like Phidias, Angelo, or Raphael, must hold a great act of imagination to form his idea, and then industriously toil, often wiping out in remorse what he drew in passion or in ignorance; so the man who would be religious must hold his creative act of prayer, to set the great example to himself, and then industriously toil to make it daily life, shaping his actual, not from the chance of circumstance, but from the ideal purpose of his soul.

There is no great growth in manly piety without fire to conceive, and then painstaking to reproduce the idea,

— without the act of prayer, the act of industry. The act of prayer, — that is the one great vital means of religious growth; the resolute desire and the unconquerable will to be the image of a perfect man; the comparison of your actual day with your ideal dream; the rising forth, borne up on mighty pens, to fly towards the far heaven of religious joy. Fast as you learn a truth, moral, affectional, or religious, apply the special truth to daily life, and you increase your piety. So the best school for religion is the daily work of common life, with its daily discipline of personal, domestic, and social duties, — the daily work in field or shop, market or house, "the charities that soothe and heal and bless."

Nothing great is ever done without industry. Sloth sinks the idle boy to stupid ignorance; and vain to him are schools, and books, and all the appliances of the instructor's art. It is industry in religion which makes the man a saint. What zeal is there for money; what diligence in learning to be a lawyer, a fiddler, or a smith! The same industry to be also religious men,— what noble images of God it would make us! ay, what blessed men! Even in the special qualities of fiddler, lawyer, smith, we should be more; for general manhood is the stuff we make into tradesmen of each special craft, and the gold which was fine in the ingot is fine also in the medal and the coin.

You have seen a skilful gardener about his work. He saves the slips of his pear-trees, prunings from his currant-bush; he watches for the sunny hours in spring to air his passion-flower and orange-tree. How nicely he shields his dahlias from the wind, his melons from the frost! Patiently he hoards cuttings from a rose-bush, and the stone of a peach; choice fruit in another's orchard next year is grafted on his crabbed stock, which

in three years rejoices in alien flowers and apples not its own. Are we not gardeners, all of us, to fill our time with greener life, with fragrant beauty, and rich, timely fruit? There are bright cheery morning hours good for putting in the seed; moments of sunnier delight, when some success not looked for — the finding of a friend, husband, or wife, the advent of a child — mellows the hours. Then nurse the tender plant of piety; one day its bloom will adorn your gloomy hour, and be a brightness in many a winter day which now you reck not of.

There are days of sadness when it rains sorrow on you, — when you mourn the loss of friends, their sad defeat in mortal life, or worse still, the failure of yourself, your wanderings from the way of life, or prostrate fall therein. Use, then, O man, these hours for penitence, if need be, and vigorous resolve. Water the choicest, tender plants; one day the little seedling you have planted with your tears shall be a broad tree, and under its arms you will screen your head from the windy storm and the tempest, — yes, find for your bones a quiet grave at last.

Do you commit a sin, an intentional violation of the law of God, you may make even that help you in your religious growth. He who never hungered knows not the worth of bread; who never suffered, nor sorrowed, nor went desolate and alone, knows not the full value of human sympathy and human love. I have sometimes thought that a man who had never sinned nor broke the integrity of his consciousness, nor, by wandering, disturbed the continuity of his march towards perfection, — that he could not know the power of religion to fortify the soul. But there are no such men. We learn to walk by stumbling at the first; and spiritual experience is also bought by errors of the soul. Peni-

tence is but the cry of the child hurt in his fall. Shame on us that we affect the pain so oft, and only learn to whine an unnatural contrition! Sure I am that the grief of a soul self-wounded, the sting of self-reproach, the torment of remorse for errors of passion, for sins of calculation, may quicken any man in his course to manhood, till he runs and is not weary. The mariner learns wisdom from each miscarriage of his ship, and fronts the seas anew to triumph over wind and wave.

Some of you are young men and maidens. You look forward to be husbands and wives, to be fathers and mothers, some day. Some of you seek to be rich, some honored. Is it not well to seek to have for yourself a noble, manly character, to be religious men and women, with a liberal development of mind and conscience, heart and soul? You will meet with losses, trials, disappointments in your business, in your friends and families, and in yourselves; many a joy will also smile on you. You may use the sunny sky and its falling weather alike to help your religious growth. Your time, young men, what life and manhood you may make of that!

Some of you are old men, your heads white with manifold experience, and life is writ in storied hieroglyphics on cheek and brow. Venerable faces! I hope I learn from you. I hardly dare essay to teach men before whom time has unrolled his lengthened scroll, men far before me in experience of life. But let me ask you, if while you have been doing your work, — have been gathering riches, and tasting the joys of time, — been son, husband, father, friend, — you have also greatened, deepened, heightened your manly character, and gained the greatest riches, — the wealth of a religious soul, incorruptible and undefiled, the joys that cannot fade away?

For old or young there is no real and lasting human blessedness without this. It is the sole sufficient and assured defence against the sorrows of the world, the disappointments and the griefs of life, the pains of unrequited righteousness and hopes that went astray. It is a never-failing fountain of delight.

> "There are briars besetting every path,
> That call for patient care;
> There is a cross in every lot,
> And an earnest need for prayer;
> But the lowly heart that trusts in Thee
> Is happy everywhere."

OF PIETY, AND THE RELATION THEREOF TO MANLY LIFE.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. — Matt. xxii. 37.

There are two things requisite for complete and perfect religion, — the love of God and the love of man; one I will call piety, the other goodness. In their natural development they are not so sharply separated as this language would seem to imply; for piety and goodness run into one another, so that you cannot tell where one begins and the other ends. But I will distinguish the two by their centre, where they are most unlike; not by their circumference, where they meet and mingle.

The part of man which is not body I will call the spirit, under that term including all the faculties not sensual. Let me, for convenience' sake, distribute these faculties of the human spirit into four classes: the intellectual, — including the æsthetic, — moral, affectional, and religious. Let mind be the name of the intellectual faculty, — including the threefold mental powers, reason, imagination, and understanding; conscience shall be the short name for the moral, heart for the affectional, and soul for the religious faculties.

I shall take it for granted that the great work of mankind on earth is to live a manly life, to use, discipline, develop, and enjoy every limb of the body, every faculty of the spirit, each in its just proportion, all in their proper place, duly co-ordinating what is merely personal

and for the present time, with what is universal and for ever. This being so, what place ought piety, the love of God, to hold in a manly life?

It seems to me that piety lies at the basis of all manly excellence. It represents the universal action of man according to his nature. This universal action, the bent of the whole man in his normal direction, is the logical condition of any special action of man in a right direction, of any particular bent that way. If I have a universal idea of universal causality in my mind, I can then understand a special cause; but without that universal idea of causality in my mind, patent or latent, I could not understand any particular cause whatever. My eye might see the fact of a man cutting down a tree, but my mind would comprehend only the conjunction in time and space, not their connection in causality. If you have not a universal idea of beauty, you do not know that this is a handsome and that a homely dress; you notice only the form and color, the texture and the fit, but see no relation to an ideal loveliness. If you have not a universal idea of the true, the just, the holy, you do not comprehend the odds betwixt a correct statement and a lie, between the deed of the priest and that of the good Samaritan, between the fidelity of Jesus and the falseness of Iscariot. This rule runs through all human nature. The universal is the logical condition of the generic, the special, and the particular. So the love of God, the universal object of the human spirit, is the logical condition of all manly life.

This is clear, if you look at man acting in each of the four modes just spoken of, — intellectual, moral, affectional, and religious.

The mind contemplates God as manifested in truth; for truth — in the wide meaning of the word including

also a comprehension of the useful and the beautiful — is the universal category of intellectual cognition. To love God with the mind is to love him as manifesting himself in the truth, or to the mind; it is to love truth, not for its uses, but for itself, because it is true, absolutely beautiful and lovely to the mind. In finite things we read the infinite truth, the absolute object of the mind.

Love of truth is a great intellectual excellence; but it is plain you must have the universal love of universal truth before you can have any special love for any particular truth whatsoever, for in all intellectual affairs the universal is the logical condition of the special.

Love of truth in general is the intellectual part of piety. We see at once that this lies at the basis of all intellectual excellence, — at love of truth in art, in science, in law, in common life. Without it you may love the convenience of truth in its various forms, useful or beautiful; but that is quite different from loving truth itself. You often find men who love the uses of truth, but not truth; they wish to have truth on their side, but not to be on the side of truth. When it does not serve their special and selfish turn, they are offended, and Peter breaks out with his "I know not the man," and "the wisest, brightest" proves also the "meanest of mankind."

The conscience contemplates God as manifested in right, in justice, for right or justice is the universal category of moral cognition. To love God with the conscience is to love him as manifested in right and justice, — is to love right or justice, not for its convenience, its specific uses, but for itself, because it is absolutely beautiful and lovely to the conscience. In changeable things we read the unchanging and eternal right, which is the absolute object of conscience.

To love right is a great moral excellence; but it is plain you must have a universal love of universal right before you can have any special love of a particular right, for, in all moral affairs, the universal is the logical condition of the special.

The love of right is the moral part of piety. This lies at the basis of all moral excellence whatever. Without this you may love right for its uses; but if only so, it is not right you love, but only the convenience it may bring to you in your selfish schemes. None was so ready to draw the sword for Jesus, or look after the money spent upon him, as the disciple who straightway denied and betrayed him. Many wish right on their side, who take small heed to be on the side of right. You shall find men enough who seem to love right in general, because they clamor for a specific, particular right; but ere long it becomes plain they only love some limited or even personal convenience they hope therefrom. The people of the United States claim to love the unalienable right of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But the long-continued cry of three million slaves, groaning under the American yoke, shows beyond question or cavil that it is not the universal and unalienable right which they love, but only the selfish advantage it affords them. If you love the right as right, for itself, because it is absolutely just and beautiful to your conscience, then you will no more deprive another of it than submit yourself to be deprived thereof. Even the robber will fight for his own. The man who knows no better rests in the selfish love of the private use of a special right.

The heart contemplates God as manifested in love, for love is the universal category of affectional cognition. To love God with the heart, is to love him as manifested in love; it is to love love, not for its convenience, but

for itself, because it is absolutely beautiful and lovely to the heart.

Here I need not reiterate what has already been twice said, of mind and of conscience.

Love of God as love, then, is the affectional part of piety, and lies at the basis of all affectional excellence. The mind and the conscience are content with ideas, with the true and the right, while the heart demands not ideas, but beings, persons, — and loves them. It is one thing to desire the love of a person for your own use and convenience, and quite different to have your personal delight in him, and desire him to have his personal delight in you. From the nature of the case, as persons are concrete and finite, man never finds the complete satisfaction of his affectional nature in them, for no person is absolutely lovely, none the absolute object of the affections. But as the mind and conscience use the finite things to help learn infinite truth and infinite right, and ultimately rest in that as their absolute object, so our heart uses the finite persons whom we reciprocally love as golden letters in the book of life, whereby we learn the absolutely lovely, the infinite object of the heart. As the philosopher has the stars of heaven, each lovely in itself, whereby to learn the absolute truth of science, — as the moralist has the events of human history, each of great moment to mankind, whereby to learn the absolute right of ethics, — so the philanthropist has the special persons of his acquaintance, each one a joy to him, as the rounds of his Jacob's ladder whereby he goes journeying up to the absolutely lovely, the infinite object of the affections.

The soul contemplates God as a being who unites all these various modes of action, as manifested in truth, in right, and in love. It apprehends him, not merely

as absolute truth, absolute right, and absolute love alone, but as all these unified into one complete and perfect Being, the infinite God. He is the absolute object of the soul, and corresponds thereto, as truth to the mind, as justice to the conscience, as love to the heart. He is to the soul absolutely true, just, and lovely, the altogether beautiful. To him the soul turns instinctively at first; then also, at length, with conscious and distinctive will.

The love of God in this fourfold way is the totality of piety, which comes from the normal use of all the faculties named before. Hence it appears that piety of this character lies at the basis of all manly excellence whatever, and is necessary to a complete and well-proportioned development of the faculties themselves.

There may be an unconscious piety: the man does not know that he loves universal truth, justice, love, — loves God. He only thinks of the special truth, justice, and love which he prizes. He does not reflect upon it; does not aim to love God in this way, yet does it nevertheless. Many a philosopher has seemed without religion even to a careful observer; sometimes has passed for an atheist. Some of them have to themselves seemed without any religion, and have denied that there was any God. But all the while their nature was truer than their will; their instincts kept their personal wholeness better than they were aware. These men loved absolute truth, not for its uses, but for itself; they laid down their lives for it, rather than violate the integrity of their intellect. They had the intellectual love of God, though they knew it not; though they denied it. No man ever has a complete and perfect intellectual consciousness of all his active nature; something instinctive germinates in us, and grows underground, as it were, before it bursts

the sod and shoots into the light of self-consciousness. Sheathed in unconsciousness lies the bud, ere long to open a bright, consummate flower. These philosophers, with a real love of truth, and yet a scorn of the name of God, understand many things, perhaps, not known to common men, but this portion of their being has yet escaped their eye; they have not made an exact and exhaustive inventory of the facts of their own nature. Such men have unconsciously much of the intellectual part of piety.

Other men have loved justice, not for the personal convenience it offered to them, but for its own sake, because it married itself to their conscience, — have loved it with a disinterested, even a self-denying love, — who yet scorned religion, denied all consciousness of God, denied his providence, perhaps his existence, and would have resolved God into matter, and no more. Yet all the while in these men, dim and unconscious, there lay the religious element; neglected, unknown, it gave the man the very love of special justice which made him strong. He knew the absolutely just, but did not know it as God.

I have known philanthropists who undervalued piety; they liked it not, — they said it was moonlight, not broad day; it gave flashes of lightning, all of which would not make light. They professed no love of God, no knowledge thereof, while they had the strongest love of love; loved persons, not with a selfish, but self-denying affection, ready to sacrifice themselves for the completeness of another man's delight. Yet underneath this philanthropy there lay the absolute and disinterested love of other men. They knew only the special form, not the universal substance thereof, — the particular love of Thomas or of Jane, not the universal love of the Infinite.

They had the affectional form of piety, though they knew it not.

I have known a man full of admiration and of love for the universe, yet lacking consciousness of its Author. He loved the truth and beauty of the world, reverenced the justice of the universe, and was himself delighted at the love he saw pervading all and blessing all; yet he recognized no God, saw only a cosmic force, which was a power of truth and beauty to his mind, a power of justice to his conscience, and a power of love to his heart. He had not a philosophic consciousness of the deeper, nobler action which went on within him, building greater than he knew. But in him also there were the several parts of piety, only not joined into one total and integral act, and not distinctly known.

This unconsciousness of piety is natural with a child. In early life it is unavoidable; only now and then some rare and precious boy or girl opens from out its husk of unconsciousness his childish bud of faith, and blossoms right early with the consciousness of God, a "strong and flame-like flower." This instinctiveness of piety is the beauty of childhood, the morning-red widely and gorgeously diffused before the rising of the sun. But as a man becomes mature, adds reflection to instinct, transmutes sentiments into ideas, he should also become conscious of his religious action, of his love of God in this fourfold form; when he loves truth, justice, love, he should know that it is God he loves underneath these special forms, and should unite them all into one great act of total piety. As the state of self-consciousness is a more advanced state than unconsciousness; as the reflective reason of the man is above the unreflective instinct of the child; so the man's conscious piety belongs to a higher stage of development, and is above

the mere instinctive and unconscious piety of the girl. Accordingly, the philosopher who loved truth for its own sake, and with his mind denied in words the God of truth, was less a philosopher for not knowing that he loved God. He had less intellectual power because he was in an abnormal state of intellectual religious growth. The man who loved justice for its own sake, and would not for an empire do a conscious wrong, whom the popular hell could not scare, nor the popular heaven allure from right, — he had less power of justice for not knowing that in loving right he loved the God of right. That philanthropist, who has such love of love that he would lay down his life for men, is less a philanthropist and has less affectional power, because he knows not that in his brave benevolence he loves the God of love. The man full of profound love of the universe, of reverence for its order, its beauty, its justice, and the love which fills the lily's cup with fragrant loveliness, who wonders at the mighty cosmic force he sees in these fractions of power, — he is less a man because he does not know it is God's world that he admires, reverences, and worships; ay, far less a man because he does not know he loves and worships God. When he becomes conscious of his own spiritual action, conscious of God, of loving God with mind and conscience, heart and soul, his special love will increase, he will see the defects there are in his piety; if it be disproportionate, through redundance here or failure there, he can correct the deformity and make his entire inner life harmonious, a well-proportioned whole. Then he feels that he goes in and out, continually, in the midst of the vast forces of the universe, which are only the forces of God; that in his studies, when he attains a truth, he confronts the thought of God; when he learns the right, he learns the

will of God laid down as a rule of conduct for the universe; and when he feels disinterested love, he knows that he partakes the feeling of the infinite God. Then, when he reverences the mighty cosmic force, it is not a blind fate in an atheistic or a pantheistic world, it is the infinite God that he confronts, and feels, and knows. He is then mindful of the mind of God, conscious of God's conscience, sensible of God's sentiment, and his own existence is in the Infinite Being of God. Thus he joins into a whole integral state of piety the various parts developed by the several faculties; there is a new growth of each, a new development of all.

If these things be so, then it is plain what relation piety sustains to manly life; it is the basis of all the higher excellence of man, and when the man is mature, what was instinctive at first becomes a state of conscious love of God.

Now, when this universal fourfold force is once developed and brought to consciousness, and the man has achieved something in this way, his piety may be left to take its natural form of expression, or it may be constrained to take a form not natural. Mankind has made many experiments upon piety; books of history are full of them. Most of these, as of all the experiments of man in progress, are failures. We aim many times before we hit the mark. The history of religion is not exceptional or peculiar in this respect. See how widely men experiment in agriculture, navigation, government, before they learn the one right way. The history of science is the history of mistakes. The history of religion and the history of astronomy are equally marked by error. It is not surprising that mistakes have been made in respect to the forms of piety after it is procured.

For there are various helps which are needful, and perhaps indispensable, in childhood, to the development of the love of God, but which are not needed after the religious character is somewhat mature. Then the man needs not those former outward helps; he has other aids suited to his greater strength. This is true of the individual, repeating no more the hymns of his nursery, — true also of mankind, that outgrows the sacrifices and the mythologies of the childhood of the world. Yet it is easy for human indolence to linger near these helps, and refuse to pass further on. So the unadventurous nomad in the Tartarian wild keeps his flock in the same close-cropped circle where they first learned to browse, while the progressive man roves ever forth "to fresh fields and pastures new." See how parents help to develop the body of the child. The little boy is put into a standing-stool, or baby-jumper, till he learns to walk. By and by he has his hoop, his top, his ball; each in turn is laid aside. He has helps to develop his mind not less, — little puzzles, tempting him to contrive, prints set off with staring colors; he has his alphabet of wooden letters, in due time his primer, his nursery rhymes, and books full of most wonderful impossibilities. He has his early reader, his first lessons in arithmetic, and so goes on with new helps proportionate to his strength. It is a long slope from counting the fingers up to calculating the orbit of a planet not yet seen. But the fingers and the solar system are alike helps to mathematic thought. When the boy is grown up to man's estate, his body vigorous and mature, he tries his strength in the natural work of society, is a merchant, a sailor, a mechanic, a farmer; he hews stones, or lifts up an axe upon the thick timber. For a long time his body grows stronger by his work, and he gets more skill.

His body pays for itself, and refunds to mankind the cost of its training up. When his mind is mature, he applies that also to the various works of society, — to transact private business, or manage the affairs of the public; for a long time his mind grows stronger, gaining new knowledge and increase of power. Thus his mind pays for its past culture, and earns its tuition as it goes along.

In this case the physical or mental power of the man assumes its natural form, and does its natural work. He has outgrown the things which pleased his childhood and informed his youth. Nobody thinks it necessary or beautiful for the accomplished scholar to go back to his alphabet and repeat it over, to return to his early arithmetic and paradigms of grammar, when he knows them all; for this is not needful to keep an active mind in a normal condition, and perform the mental work of a mature man. Nobody sends a lumberer from the woods back to his nursery, or tells him he cannot keep his strength without daily or weekly sleeping in his little cradle, or exercising with the hoop, or top, or ball, which helped his babyhood. Because these little trifles sufficed once, they cannot help him now. Man, reaching forward, forgets the things that are behind.

Now the mischief is, that, in matters of religion, men demand that he who has a mature and well-proportioned piety should always go back to the rude helps of his boyhood, to the A B C of religion and the nursery books of piety. He is not bid to take his power of piety and apply it to the common walks of life. The Newton of piety is sent back to the dame-school of religion, and told to keep counting his fingers, otherwise there is no health in him, and all piety is wiped out of his consciousness, and he hates God, and God hates him. He

must study the anicular lines on the school-dame's slate, not the diagrams of God writ on the heavens in points of fire. We are told that what once thus helped to mould a religious character must be continually resorted to, and become the permanent form thereof.

This notion is exceedingly pernicious. It wastes the practical power of piety by directing it from its natural work; it keeps the steam-engine always fanning and blowing itself, perpetually firing itself up, while it turns no wheels but its own, and does no work but feed and fire itself. This constant firing up of one's self is looked on as the natural work and only form of piety. Ask any popular minister, in one of the predominant sects, for the man most marked for piety, and he will not show you the men with the power of business who do the work of life, — the upright mechanic, merchant, or farmer; not the men with the power of thought, of justice, or of love; not him whose whole life is one great act of fourfold piety. No, he will show you some men who are always a-dawdling over their souls, going back to the baby-jumpers and nursery rhymes of their early days, and everlastingly coming to the church to fire themselves up, calling themselves "miserable offenders," and saying, "save us, good Lord." If a man thinks himself a miserable offender, let him away with the offence, and be done with the complaint at once and forever. It is dangerous to reiterate so sad a cry.

You see this mistake, on a large scale, in the zeal with which nations or sects cling to their religious institutions long after they are obsolete. Thus the Hebrew cleaves to his ancient ritual and ancient creed, refusing to share the religious science which mankind has brought to light since Moses and Samuel went home to their God. The two great sects of Christendom exhibit the same thing

in their adherence to ceremonies and opinions which once were the greatest helps and the highest expression of piety to mankind, but which have long since lost all virtue except as relics. The same error is repeated on a small scale all about us, men trying to believe what science proves ridiculous, and only succeeding by the destruction of reason. It was easy to make the mistake, but when made it need not be made perpetual.

Then this causes another evil: not only do men waste the practical power of piety, but they cease to get more. To feed on baby's food, to be dandled in mother's arms, to play with boys' playthings, to learn boys' lessons, and be amused with boys' stories, — this helps the boy, but it hinders the man. Long ago we got from these helps all that was in them. To stay longer is waste of time. Look at the men who have been doing this for ten years; they are where they were ten years ago. They have done well if they have not fallen back. If we keep the baby's shoes forever on the child, what will become of the feet? What if you kept the boy over his nursery rhymes forever, or tried to make the man grown believe that they contained the finest poetry in the world, that the giant stories and the fairy tales therein were all true, what effect would it have on his mind? Suppose you told him that the proof of his manhood consisted in his fondness for little boys' playthings, and the little story-books and the little games of little children, and kept him securely fastened to the apron-strings of the school-dame; suppose you could make him believe so! You must make him a fool first. What would work so bad in intellectual affairs works quite as ill in the matter of piety. The story of the flood has strangled a world of souls. The miracles of the New Testament no longer heal, but hurt mankind.

Then this method of procedure disgusts well-educated and powerful men with piety itself, and with all that bears the name of religion. "Go your ways," say they, "and cant your canting as much as you like, only come not near us with your grimace." Many a man sees this misdirection of piety, and the bigotry which environs it, and turns off from religion itself, and will have nothing to do with it. Philosophers have always had a bad name in religious matters; many of them have turned away in disgust from the folly which is taught in its name. Of all the great philosophers of this day, I think no one takes any interest in the popular forms of religion. Do we ever hear religion referred to in politics? It is mentioned officially in proclamations and messages; but in the parliamentary debates of Europe and America, in the state papers of the nations, you find hardly a trace of the name or the fact. Honest men and manly men are ashamed to refer to this, because it has been so connected with unmanly dawdling and niggardly turning back, — they dislike to mention the word. So religion has ceased to be one of the recognized forces of the State. I do not remember a good law passed in my time from an alleged religious motive. Capital punishment, and the laws forbidding work or play on Sunday, are the only things left on the statute-book for which a strictly "religious motive" is assigned! The annual thanksgivings and fast-days are mementos of the political power of the popular religious opinions in other times. Men of great influence in America are commonly men of little apparent respect for religion; it seems to have no influence on their public conduct, and, in many cases, none on their private character; the class most eminent for intellectual culture throughout all Christendom is heedless of religion. The class of rich men has

small esteem for it; yet in all the great towns of America the most reputable churches have fallen under their control, with such results as we see. The life of the nation in its great flood passes by, and does not touch the churches, — "the institutions of religion." Such fatal errors come from this mistake.

But there is a natural form of piety. The natural use of the strength of a strong man, or the wisdom of a wise one, is to the work of a strong man or a wise one. What is the natural work of piety? Obviously it is practical life, — the use of all the faculties in their proper spheres, and for their natural function. Love of God, as truth, justice, love, must appear in a life marked by these qualities; that is the only effectual "ordinance of religion." A profession of the man's convictions, joining a society, assisting at a ceremony, — all these are of the same value in science as in religion; as good forms of chemistry as of piety. The natural form of piety is goodness, morality, living a true, just, affectionate, self-faithful life, from the motive of a pious man. Real piety, love of God, if left to itself, assumes the form of real morality, loyal obedience to God's law. Thus the power of religion does the work of religion, and is not merely to feed itself.

There are various degrees of piety, the quality ever the same, the quantity variable, and of course various degrees of goodness as the result thereof. Where there is but little piety the work of goodness is done as a duty, under coercion as it were, with only the voluntary, not the spontaneous will; it is not done from a love of the duty, only in obedience to a law of God felt within the conscience or the soul, a law which bids the deed. The man's desires and duty are in opposition, not conjunction; but duty rules. That is the goodness of a boy in religion, the common goodness of the world.

At length the rising man shoots above this rudimentary state, has an increase of love of God, and therefore of love of man; his goodness is spontaneous, not merely enforced by volition. He does the good thing which comes in his way, and because it comes in his way; is true to his mind, his conscience, heart, and soul, and feels small temptation to do to others what he would not receive from them; he will deny himself for the sake of his brother near at hand. His desire attracts in the line of his duty, both in conjunction now. Not in vain does the poor, the oppressed, the hunted fugitive look up to him. This is the goodness of men well grown in piety. You find such men in all Christian sects, Protestant and Catholic; in all the great religious parties of the civilized world, among Buddhists, Mahometans, and Jews. They are kind fathers, generous citizens, unimpeachable in their business, beautiful in their daily lives. You see the man's piety in his work, and in his play. It appears in all the forms of his activity, individual, domestic, social, ecclesiastic, or political.

But the man goes on in his growth of piety, loving truth, justice, love, loving God the more. What is piety within must be morality without. The quality and quantity of the outward must increase as the quality and quantity of the inward. So his eminent piety must become eminent morality, which is philanthropy. He loves not only his kindred and his country, but all mankind; not only the good, but also the evil. He has more goodness than the channels of his daily life will hold. So it runs over the banks, to water and to feed a thousand thirsty plants. Not content with the duty that lies along his track, he goes out to seek it; not only willing, he has a salient longing to do good, to spread his truth, his justice, his love, his piety, over all the world. His daily life is a

profession of his conscious piety to God, published in perpetual good-will to men.

This is the natural form of piety; one which it assumes if left to itself. Not more naturally does the beaver build, or the blackbird sing her own wild gushing melody, than the man of real piety lives it in this beautiful outward life. So from the perennial spring wells forth the stream to quicken the meadow with new access of green, and perfect beauty bursting into bloom.

Thus piety does the work it was meant to do; the man does not sigh and weep, and make grimaces, forever in a fuss about his soul; he lives right on. Is his life marked with errors, sins, — he ploughs over the barren spot with his remorse, sows with new seed, and the old desert blossoms like a rose. He is free in his spiritual life, not confined to set forms of thought, of action, or of feeling. He accepts what his mind regards as true, what his conscience decides is right, what his heart deems lovely, and what is holy to his soul; all else he puts far from him. Though the ancient and the honorable of the earth bid him bow down to them, his stubborn knees bend only at the bidding of his manly soul. His piety is his freedom before God, not his bondage unto men. The toys and child's stories of religion are to him toys and child's stories, but no more. No baby-shoes deform his manly feet.

This piety, thus left to obey its natural law, keeps in sound health, and grows continually more and more. Doing his task, the man makes no more ado about his soul than about his sense. Yet it grows like the oak-tree. He gets continually more love of truth and right and justice, more love of God, and so more love of man. Every faculty becomes continually more. His mind acts after the universal law of the intellect, his conscience

according to the universal moral law, his affections and his soul after the universal law thereof, and so he is strong with the strength of God, — in this fourfold way communicating with him. With this strengthening of the moral faculties there comes a tranquillity, a calmness and repose which nothing else can give, and also a beauty of character which you vainly seek elsewhere. When a man has the intellectual, the moral, the affectional part of piety, when he unites them all with conscious love of God, and puts that manifold piety into morality, his eminent piety into philanthropy, he attains the highest form of loveliness which belongs to mortal man. His is the palmy loftiness of man,— such strength, such calmness, and such transcendent loveliness of soul.

I know some men mock at the name of piety; I do not wonder at their scoff, for it has been made to stand as the symbol of littleness, meanness, envy, bigotry, and hypocritical superstition; for qualities I hate to name. Of what is popularly called piety there is no lack; it is abundant everywhere, common as weeds in the ditch, and clogs the wheels of mankind in every quarter of the world. Yet real piety, in manly quantity and in a manly form, is an uncommon thing. It is marvellous what other wants the want of this brings in; look over the long list of brilliant names that glitter in English history for the past three hundred years; study their aims, their outward and their inner life; explore the causes of their manifold defeat, and you will see the primal curse of all these men was lack of piety. They did not love truth, justice, or love; they did not love God with all their mind and conscience, heart and soul. Hence came the failure of many a mighty-minded man. Look at the brilliant array of distinguished talent in France for the

last five generations; what intellectual gifts, what understanding, what imagination, what reason! — but with it all, what corruption, what waste of faculty, what lack of strong and calm and holy life, in these great famous men! Their literature seems marvellously like the thin, cold dazzle of northern lights upon the wintry ice. In our own country it is still the same; the high intellectual gift or culture is ashamed of religion, and flouts at God; and hence the faults we see.

But real piety is what we need; we need much of it, — need it in the natural form thereof. Ours is an age of great activity. The peaceful hand was never so busy as to-day; the productive head never created so fast before. See how the forces of nature yield themselves up to man: the river stops for him, content to be his servant, and weave and spin; the ocean is his vassal, his toilsome bondsman; the lightning stoops out of heaven, and bears thoughtful burdens on its electric track from town to town. All this comes from the rapid activity of the lower intellect of man. Is there a conscious piety to correspond with this, — a conscious love of truth and right and love, — a love of God? Ask the State, ask the church, ask society, and ask our homes.

The age requires a piety most eminent. What was religion enough for the time of the Patriarchs, or the Prophets, or the Apostles, or the Reformers, or the Puritans, is not enough for the heightened consciousness of mankind to-day. When the world thinks in lightning, it is not proportionate to pray in lead. The old theologies, the philosophies of religion of ancient times, will not suffice us now. We want a religion of the intellect, of the conscience, of the affections, of the soul, — the natural religion of all the faculties of man. The form also must be natural and new.

We want this natural piety in the form of normal human life, — morality, philanthropy. Piety is not to forsake, but possess the world; not to become incarnate in a nun and a monk, but in women and in men. Here are the duties of life to be done. You are to do them, do them religiously, consciously obedient to the law of God, not atheistically, loving only your selfish gain. Here are the sins of trade to be corrected. You are to show that a good merchant, mechanic, farmer, doctor, lawyer, is a real saint, a saint at work. Here are the errors of philosophy, theology, politics, to be made way with. It is the function of piety to abolish these and supply their place with new truths all radiant with God. Here are the great evils of Church and State, of social and domestic life, wrongs to be righted, evils to be outgrown: it is the business of piety to mend all this. Ours is no age when religion can forsake the broad way of life. In the public street must she journey on, open her shop in the crowded square, and teach men by deeds, her life more eloquent than any lips. Hers is not now the voice that is to cry in the wilderness, but in the public haunts of men must she call them to make straight their ways.

We must possess all parts of this piety, — the intellectual, moral, affectional, — yea, total piety. This is not an age when men in religion's name can safely sneer at philosophy, call reason "carnal," make mouths at immutable justice, and blast with their damnation the faces of mankind. Priests have had their day, and in dull corners still aim to protract their favorite and most ancient night; but the sun has risen with healing in his wings. Piety without goodness, without justice, without truth or love, is seen to be the pretence of the hypocrite. Can philosophy satisfy us without religion? Even the

head feels a coldness from the want of piety. The greatest intellect is ruled by the same integral laws with the least, and needs this fourfold love of God; and the great intellects that scorn religion are largest sufferers from their scorn.

Any man may attain this piety; it lies level to all. Yet it is not to be won without difficulty, manly effort, self-denial of the low for the sake of the highest in us. Of you, young man, young maid, it will demand both prayer and toil. Not without great efforts are great heights won. In your period of passion you must subordinate instinctive desire to your reason, your conscience, your heart and soul; the lust of the body to the spirit's love. In the period of ambition you must co-ordinate all that is personal or selfish with what is absolutely true, just, holy, and good. Surely this will demand self-denial, now of instinctive desire, now of selfish ambition. Much you must sacrifice; but you will gain the possession, the use, the development, and the joy of your own mind and conscience, heart and soul. You will never sacrifice truth, justice, holiness, or love. All these you will gain; gain for to-day, gain forever. What inward blessedness will you acquire! what strength, what tranquillity, what loveliness, what joy in God! You will have your delight in him; he his in you. Is it not worth while to live so that you know you are in unison with God; in unison too, with men; in quantity growing more, in quality superior? Make the trial for manly excellence, and the result is yours, for time and for eternity.

CONSCIOUS RELIGION AS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON FROM THE TEXT —

The Lord is the strength of my life. — **Psalm xxvii. 1.**

. . . STRENGTH of character appears in two general modes of power, accordingly as it is tried by one or other of two tests. It is power to do, or power to bear. One is active, and the other passive, but both are only diverse modes of the same thing. The hard anvil can bear the blows of the hard hammer which smites it, because there is the same solidity in the nether anvil which bears up, as in the upper hammer which bears down. It takes as much solidity to bear the blow as to give it; only one is solidity active, the other merely passive.

Religion increases the general strength and volume of character. The reason is plain: Religion is keeping the natural law of human nature in its threefold mode of action, — in relation to myself, to my brother, and to my God; the co-ordination of my will with the will of God, with the ideal of my nature. So it is action according to my nature, not against it; it is the agreement of my finite will with the infinite Will which controls the universe and provides for each portion thereof.

Now, to use a thing against its nature, to abuse it, is ultimately to fail of the natural end thereof, and waste the natural means provided for the attainment of the end. A boat is useful to journey with by sea, a chaise

to journey with by land; use each for its purpose, you enjoy the means and achieve the end. But put off to sea in your chaise, or put on to land in your boat, you miss the end, — you lose also the means. This is true of the natural, as of the artificial instruments of man; of his limbs, as of his land-carriages or sea-carriages. Hands are to work with, feet to walk on; the feet would make a poor figure in working, the hands an ill figure in essaying to walk. The same rule holds good in respect to spiritual faculties as in bodily organs. Passion is not designed to rule conscience, but to serve; conscience not to serve passion, but to rule. If passion rule and conscience serve, the end is not reached, — you are in a state of general discord with yourself, your brother, and your God; the means also fail and perish, — conscience becomes weak, the passion itself dies from the plethora of its indulgence; the whole man grows less and less, till he becomes the smallest thing he is capable of dwindling into. But if conscience rule and passion serve, all goes well; you reach the end, — welfare in general, harmony with yourself, concord with your brother, and unity with your God; you keep the means, — conscience and passion are each in position, and at their proper function; the faculties enlarge until they reach their entire measure of possible growth, and the whole man becomes the greatest he is capable of being here and now.

You see this strength of character, which naturally results from religion, not only in its general forms, but in its special modes. Look a moment at the passive power, the power to endure suffering. See the fact in the endurance of the terrible artificial torments that are used to put down new forms of religion, or extinguish the old. While men believe in the divinity of matter,

they try suspected persons by exposure to the elements, — walking over red-hot ploughshares, holding fire in the naked hand, or plunging into water. All new forms of religion must pass through the same ordeal, and run the gantlet betwixt bishops, priests, inquisitors; between scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. See how faithfully the trial has been borne. Men naturally shrink from pain; the stout man dreads the toothache, he curls at the mention of the rheumatism, and shivers at the idea of an ague; how suddenly he drops a piece of burning paper which would tease his hand for a minute! But let a man have religion wakened in his heart, and be convinced that it is of God, let others attempt to drive it out of him, and how ready is he to bear all that malice can devise or tyranny inflict! The thumb-screws and the racks, the whip, the gallows, and the stake, — the religious man has strength to bear all these; and Cranmer holds his right arm, erring now no more, in the flame, till the hand drops off in the scalding heat. You know the persecutions of Peter and Paul, the martyrdom of Stephen, the trials of early Christians, — Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin, Irenæus, and the rest. They all went out to preach the form of religion themselves had practised, and enjoyed in their own souls. What could they offer men as an inducement to conversion? The common argument at this day — respectability, a comfortable life and an honorable death, the praise of men? Could Origen and Cyprian tell the young maiden, "Come to our church, and you will be sure to get a nice husband, as dainty fine as any patrician in Ephesus or Carthage"? Could they promise "a fashionable company in prayer," and a rich wife to the young man who joined their church? It was not exactly so; nay, it was considerably different. They could offer their converts hunger, and nakedness,

and peril, and prison, and the sword; ay, and the scorn of relatives and the contemporaneous jeer of a cruel world. But "the word of God grew and prevailed." The nice voluptuary, the dainty woman, too delicate to set foot upon the ground, became converted, and then they could defy the axe of the headsman and the tormentor's rack. Unabashed they stood before wild beasts; ay, they looked in the face of the marshals and commissioners and district judges of those times, — men who perverted law and spit on justice with blasphemous expectoration, — and yet the religious soul did not fear!

. . . You all know what strength of endurance religion gave to Bunyan and Fox, and their compeers the Quakers, in Boston as well as England; to the Mormons in Missouri, and in all quarters of Christendom. Religion made these men formidably strong. The axe of the tormentor was as idle to stay them as the gallows to stop a sunbeam. This power of endurance is general, of all forms of religion. It does not depend on what is Jewish in Judaism, or Christian in Christianity, but on what is religious in religion, what is human in man.

But that is only a spasmodic form of heroism, — the reaction of human nature against unnatural evil. You see religion producing the same strength to endure sufferings which are not arbitrarily imposed by cruel men. The stories of martyrdom only bring out in unusual forms the silent heroism which works unheeded in society every day. The strength is always there; oppression, which makes wise men mad, in making religious men martyrs only finds and reveals the heroism; it does not make it, more than the stone-cutter makes the marble which he hews into the form his thought requires. The heroism is always there. So there is always enough electricity in the air above this town to blast it to atoms

and burn it to cinders. Not a babe could be born without it, not a snow-drop bloom; yet no one heeds the silent force. Let two different streams of air, one warm, the other cold, meet here, the lightning tells of the reserved power which hung all day above our heads.

I love now and then to look on the strength of endurance which religion gives the most heroic martyrs. Even in these times the example is needed. Though the fagot is only ashes now, and the axe's edge is blunt, there are other forms of martyrdom, bloodless, yet not less cruel in motive and effect. But I love best to see this same strength in lovelier forms, enduring the common ills of life, — poverty, sickness, disappointment, the loss of friends, the withering of the fondest hopes of mortal men. One is occasional lightning, thundering and grand, but transient; the other is daily sunshine which makes no noisy stir on any day, but throughout the year is constant, creative, and exceeding beautiful.

Did you never see a young woman with the finest faculties, every hope of mortal success crushed in her heart; see her endure it all, — the slow torture which eats away the mortal from the immortal, — with a spirit still unruffled, with a calm cheerfulness and a strong trust in God? We all have seen such things, — the loveliest forms of martyrdom.

Did you never see a young man with large faculties, fitting him to shine among the loftiest stars of this our human heaven, in the name of duty forego his own intellectual culture for the sake of a mother, a sister, or a father dependent upon his toil, and be a drudge when he might else have been a shining light; and by the grace of religion do it so that in all of what he counted drudgery he was kinglier than a king? Did you never see the wife, the daughter, or the son of a drunkard sustained by

their religion to bear sorrows to which Nebuchadnezzar's seven-fold heated furnace were a rose-garden, — bear it and not complain, — grow sweeter in that bitterness? There are many such examples all about us, and holy souls go through that misery of torture clean as sunlight through the pestilential air of a town stricken with plague. So the pagan poets tell a story of the fountain Arethusa, which for many a league ran through the salt and bitter sea, all the way from Peloponnesus to Trinacria, and then came up pure, sweet, and sparkling water, far off in Ortygia, spreading greenness and growth in the valley, where the anemone and asphodel paid back their beauty to the stream which gave them life.

Such are daily examples of the fortitude and strength to suffer which religion gives. When we look carelessly on men in their work or their play, busy in the streets or thoughtful in a church, we think little of the amount of religion there is in these human hearts; but when you need it in times of great trial, then it comes up in the broad streets and little lanes of life. Disappointment is a bitter root, and sorrow is a bitter flower, and suffering is a bitter fruit, but the religious soul makes medicine thereof, and is strengthened even by the poisons of life. So out of a brewer's dregs and a distiller's waste in a city have I seen the bee suck sweetest honey for present joy, and lay it up for winter's use. Yea, the strong man in the fable, while hungering, found honey in the lion's bones he once had slain; got delight from the destroyer, and meat out of the eater's mouth.

Why is it that the religious man has this power to suffer and endure? Religion is the normal mode of life for man, and when he uses his faculties according to their natural law, they act harmoniously, and all grow strong. Besides this, the religious man has a confidence

in his God; he knows there is the Infinite One, who has foreseen all, and provided for all, — provided a recompense for all the unavoidable suffering of his children here. If you know that it is a part of the purpose of the infinite Father that you must suffer to accomplish your own development, or the development of mankind, yet understand that the suffering must needs be a good for you, then you will not fear. "The flesh may quiver as the pincers tear," but you quiver not; the will is firm, and firm is the unconquerable trust. "Be still, O flesh, and burn!" says the martyr to the molecules of dust that form his chariot of time, — and the three holy children of the Hebrew tale sing psalms in their fiery furnace, a Fourth with them; and Stephen in his stoning thinks that he sees his God, and to Paul in his prison there comes a great cheering light; yes, to Bunyan, and Fox, and Latimer, and John Rogers, in their torments; to the poor maiden stifled by the slowly strangling sea; to her whose crystal urn of love is shattered at her feet; to the young man who sees the college of his dream fade off into a barn; and the mother, wife, or child who sees the father of the family bloat, deform, and uglify himself into the drunkard, and, falling into the grave, crush underneath his lumbering weight all of their mortal hopes. Religion gives them all a strength to suffer, and be blessed by the trials they endure. There are times when nothing outward is left but suffering. Then it is a great thing to have the stomach for it, the faith in God which disenchants the soul of pain. Did not Jesus, in the Gospel, have his agony and his bloody sweat, — the last act of that great tragedy? Did not religion come, an angel, to strengthen him, and all alone, deserted, forsaken, he could say, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me"?

. . . See this same strength in another form, — the power to do. Religion not only gives the feminine capacity to suffer, but the masculine capability to do. The religious man can do more than another without religion, who is his equal in other respects; because he masters and concentrates his faculties, making them work in harmony with each other, in concord with mankind, in unity with God; and because he knows there is a God who works with him, and so arranges the forces of the universe that every wrong shall be righted, and the ultimate well-being of each be made sure of forever. Besides, he has a higher inspiration and loftier motive, which strengthen, refine, and ennoble him. Adam Clarke tells us how much more of mere intellectual labor he could perform after his conversion than before. Ignatius Loyola makes the same confession. They each attribute it to the technical peculiarity of their sectarianism, to Methodism or Catholicism, to Christianity; but the fact is universal, and applies to religion under all forms. It is easily explained by the greater harmony of the faculties, and by the higher motive which animates the man, the more certain trust which inspires him. An earnest youth in love with an earnest maid — his love returned — gets more power of character from the ardor of her affection and the strength of his passion; and when the soul of man rises up in its great act of love to become one with God, you need not marvel if the man is strong. "I can do all things," says Paul, "through Christ who strengtheneth me." Buddhists and Hebrews and Mohammedans say the same of their religion.

Then religion helps a man to two positive things, — first, to a desire of the right; next, to a progressive knowledge and practice of the right. Justice is always power; whoso has that commands the world. A fool

in the right way, says the proverb, can beat a wise man in the wrong. The civilized man has an advantage over the savage, in his knowledge of nature. He can make the forces of the universe toil for him: the wind drives his ship; the water turns his mill, spins and weaves for him; lightning runs his errands; steam carries the new lord of nature over land or ocean without rest. He that knows justice, and does it, has the same advantage over all that do it not. He sets his mill on the rock, and the river of God forever turns his wheels.

The practice of the right in the common affairs of life is called honesty. An honest man is one who knows, loves, and does right because it is right. Is there anything but this total integrity, which I call religion, that can be trusted to keep a man honest in small things and great things, in things private and things public? I know nothing else with this power. True, it is said, "honesty is the best policy," and as all men love the best policy, they will be honest for that reason. But to follow the best policy is a very different thing from being honest; the love of justice and the love of personal profit or pleasure are quite different. But is honesty the best policy? Policy is means to achieve a special end. If the end you seek be the common object of desire, — if it be material pleasure in your period of passion, or material profit in your period of ambition, — if you seek for money, for ease, honor, power over men, and their approbation, — then honesty is not the best policy; is means from it, not to it. Honesty of thought and speech is the worst policy for a minister's clerical reputation. Charity impairs an estate; unpopular excellence is the ruin of a man's respectability. It is good policy to lie in the popular way; to steal after the respectable fashion. The hard creditor is surest of his

debt; the cruel landlord does not lose his rent; the severe master is uniformly served the best; who gives little and with a grudge finds often the most of obvious gratitude. He that destroys the perishing is more honored in Christendom than he who comes to save the lost. The slave-hunter is a popular Christian in the American church, and gets his pay in money and ecclesiastical reputation. The honesty of Jesus brought him to the bar of Herod and Pilate; their best policy nailed him to the cross. Was it good policy in Paul to turn Christian? His honesty brought him to weariness and painfulness, to cold and nakedness, to stripes and imprisonment, to a hateful reputation on the earth. Honesty the best policy for personal selfishness! Ask the "Holy Alliance." Honesty is the means to self-respect, to growth in manly qualities, to high human welfare, — a means to the kingdom of heaven. When men claim that honesty is the best policy, is it this which they mean?

I will not say a man cannot be honest without a distinct consciousness of his relation to God; but I must say that consciousness of God is a great help to honesty in the business of a shop, or the business of a nation; and without religion, unconscious if no more, it seems to me honesty is not possible.

By reminding me of my relation to the universe, religion helps counteract the tendency to selfishness. Self-love is natural and indispensable; it keeps the man whole, — is the centripetal power, representing the natural cohesion of all the faculties. Without that, the man would drop to pieces, as it were, and be dissolved in the mass of men, as a lump of clay in the ocean. Selfishness is the abnormal excess of this self-love. It takes various forms. In the period of passion, it com-

monly shows itself as intemperate love of sensual pleasure; in the period of ambition, as intemperate love of money, of power, rank, or renown. There are as many modes of selfishness as there are propensities which may go to excess Self-love belongs to the natural harmony of the faculties, and is a means of strength. Selfishness comes from the tyranny of some one appetite which subordinates the other faculties of man, and is a cause of weakness, a disqualification for my duties to myself, to my brother, and my God. Now the effort to become religious, working in you a love of man and of God, a desire of harmony with yourself, of concord with man and unity with him, diminishes selfishness, develops your instinctive self-love into conscious self-respect, into faithfulness to yourself, and so enlarges continually the little ring of your character, and makes you strong to bear the crosses and do the duties of daily life.

Much of a man's ability consists in his power to concentrate his energies for a purpose; in power to deny some private selfish lust — of material pleasure or profit — for the sake of public love. I know of naught but religion that can be trusted to promote this power of self-denial, which is indispensable to a manly man. There can be no great general power without this; no strong character that lies deep in the sea and holds on its way through sunshine and through storm, and unabashed by tempests comes safe to port. I suppose you all know men and women who now are not capable of any large self-denial, — the babies of mere selfish instinct. It is painful to look on such, domineered over by their propensities. Compared to noble-hearted men and women, they are as the mushroom and the toadstool to the oak, under whose shade the fungus springs up in a rainy night to blacken and perish in a day. Self-

denial is indispensable to a strong character, and the loftiest kind thereof comes only of a religious stock, — from consciousness of obligation and dependence upon God.

In youth the seductions of passion lead us easily astray; in manhood there are the more dangerous seductions of ambition, when lust of pleasure gives way to lust of profit; and in old age the man is often the victim of the propensities he delicately nursed in earlier life, and dwindles down into the dotage of a hunker or a libertine. It is easy to yield now to this, and then to that, but both mislead us to our partial and general loss, to weakness of power and poverty of achievement, to shipwreck of this great argosy of mortal life. How many do you see slain by lust of pleasure! How many more by lust of power, — pecuniary, social, or political power! Religious self-denial would have kept them strong and beautiful and safe.

Religion gives a man courage. I do not mean the courage which comes of tough muscles and rigid nerves, — of a stomach which never surrenders. That also is a good thing, the hardihood of the flesh; let me do it no injustice. But I mean the higher, moral courage, which can look danger and death in the face unawed and undismayed; the courage that can encounter loss of ease, of wealth, of friends, of your own good name; the courage that can face a world full of howling and of scorn, — ay, of loathing and of hate; can see all these with a smile, and, suffering it all, can still toil on, conscious of the result, yet fearless still. I do not mean the courage that hates, that smites, that kills, but the calm courage that loves and heals and blesses such as smite and hate and kill; the courage that dares resist evil, popular, powerful, anointed evil, yet does it with good, and knows it

shall thereby overcome. That is not a common quality. I think it never comes without religion. It belongs to all great forms of religious excellence; it is not specifically Hebrew or Christian, but generically human and of religion under all forms.

Without this courage a man looks little and mean, especially a man otherwise great, — with great intellect and great culture, and occupying a great place. You see all about you how little such men are worth; too cowardly to brave a temporary defeat, they are swiftly brought to permanent ruin. Look over the long array of brilliant names in American, English, universal history, and see what lofty men, born to a large estate of intellect, and disciplined to manifold and brilliant mental power, for lack of courage to be true amid the false, and upright amid the grovelling, have laid their proud foreheads in the dust, and mean men have triumphed over the mighty!

Did you never read here in your Old Testament, here in your New Testament, here in your Apocrypha, how religion gave men, yea, and women too, this courage, and said to them, "Be strong and very courageous; turn not to the right hand, neither to the left," — and made heroes out of Jeremiah and Elias? Did you never read of the strength of courage, the courage of conscience, which religion gave to the "unlearned and ignorant men" who, from peasants that trembled before a Hebrew Rabbi's copious beard, became apostles to stand before the wrath of kings and not quake, to found churches by their prayers, and to feed them with their blood? You know, we all know, what courage conscious religion gave to our fathers. Their corporal courage grew more firmly knit, as men learned by bitter blows who crossed swords with them on the battle-field; but

their moral courage grew giant high. You know how they dwelt here, amid what suffering, yet with what patience; how they toiled to build up these houses, these churches, and the institutions of the State.

With this honesty, this self-denial, there comes a total energy of character which nothing else can give. You see what strength religion gives; what energy and continual persistence in their cause it gave to men like the Apostles, like the martyrs and great saints of the Christian church, of the Hebrew, the Mohammedan, and the Pagan church. You may see this energy in a rough form in the soldiers of the English revolution, in the "Ironsides" of Cromwell, in the stern and unflinching endurance of the Puritans of either England, the Old or the New, who both did and suffered what is possible to mortal flesh only when it is sustained by a religious faith. But you see it in forms far more beautiful, as represented by the missionaries who carry the glad tidings of their faith to other lands, and endure the sorrows of persecution with the long-suffering and loving-kindness we worship in the good God. This is not peculiar to Christianity. The Buddhists had their missionaries hundreds of years before Jesus of Nazareth first saw the light. They seem to have been the first that ever went abroad, not to conquer, but convert; not to get power, or wealth, or even wisdom, but to carry the power of the mind, the riches of conscience and the affections, and the wisdom of the soul; and in them you find the total energy which religious conviction gives to manly character in its hour of peril. But why go abroad to look for this? Our own streets exhibit the same thing in the form of the philanthropist. The sister of charity treads the miserable alleys of Naples and of Rome; the Catholic visitor of the poor winds along in the sloughs and slums of St.

Giles's parish in Protestant London, despised and hated by the well-endowed clergy, whose church aisles are never trodden save by wealthy feet; and in the mire of the street, in the reeking squalidness of the cellars, where misery burrows with crime, he labors for their bodies and their souls. In our own Boston do I not know feeble-bodied and delicate women, who with their feet write out the gospel of loving-kindness and tender mercy on the mud or the snow of the kennels of this city? — women of wise intellect and nice culture, who, like that great philanthropist, come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Look at the reformers of America at this day, — some of them men of large abilities, of commensurate culture, of easy estate, once respected, flattered, and courted too by their associates, but now despised for their justice and their charity, hated for the eminent affection which makes them look after the welfare of the criminal, the drunkard, the pauper, the outcast, and the slave, and feared for the power with which they assert the rights of man against the wrongs which avarice inflicts. See the total energy which marks these men, whose life is a long profession of religion, — their creed writ all over the land, and their history a slow martyrdom, — and you may see the vigor which comes of religious conviction. These are the nobler forms of energy. The soldier destroys, at best defends, while the philanthropist creates.

Last of all these forms of strength, religion gives the power of self-reliance; reliance on your mind for truth, on your conscience for justice, on your heart for love, on your soul for faith, and through all these reliance on the infinite God. Then you will keep the integrity of your own nature spite of the mightiest men, spite of a

multitude of millions, spite of States and churches and traditions, and a worldly world filled with covetousness and priestcraft. You will say to them all, "Stand by, and let alone; I must be true to myself, and thereby true to my God."

I think nothing but religion can give any man this strength to do and to suffer; that without this, the men of greatest gift and greatest attainment too, do not live out half the glory of their days, nor reach half their stature. Look over the list of the world's great failures, and see why Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon came each to such an untimely and vulgar end! Had they added religion to their attainments and their conquests, what empires of welfare would they not hold in fee, and give us to enjoy! Without it, the greatest man is a failure. With it, the smallest is a triumph. He adds to his character; he enjoys his strength; he delights while he rejoices, growing to more vigorous manliness; and when the fragrant petals of the spirit burst asunder and crowd off this outer husk of the body, and bloom into glorious humanity, what a strong and flame-like flower shall blossom there for everlasting life.

There are various forms of strength. Wealth is power; office is power; beauty is power; knowledge is power. Religion too is power. This is the power of powers, for it concentrates, moves, and directs aright the force of money, of office, of beauty, and of knowledge. Do men understand this? They often act and live as if they knew it not. Look at our "strong men," not only mighty by position in office or on money, but mighty by nature. In what are they strong? In a knowledge of the passions and prejudices of men; of the interests and expedients and honors of the day; in a knowledge of men's selfishness and their willingness to

sin; in experienced skill to use the means for certain selfish, low, and ignoble ends, organizing a contrivance against mankind; in power of speech and act to make the better seem the worse, and wrong assume the guise of right. It is in this that our "great men" are chiefly great. They are weak in a knowledge of what in man is noble, even when he errs; they know nothing of justice; they care little for love. They know the animal that is in us, not the human, far less the god-like. Mighty in cunning, they are weak in knowledge of the true, the just, the good, the holy, and the ever beautiful. They look up at the mountains and mock at God. So they are impotent to know the expedient of eternity, what profits now and profits for ever and ever. Blame them not too much; the educational forces of society breed up such men, — as college lads all learn to cipher and to scan.

In the long run of the ages see how the religious man distances the unreligious. The memory of him who seeks to inaugurate cunning into the State for his own behoof is ere long gibbeted before the world, and his lie is cast out with scorn and hate; and the treason of the traitor to mankind is remembered only with a curse; while the wisdom of the wise, the justice of the upright, the love of the affectionate, and the piety of holy-hearted men, incarnated in the institutions of the State, live, and will forever live, long after Rome and America have gone to the ground. Tyrants have a short breath, their fame a sudden ending; and the power of the ungodly, like the lamp of the wicked, shall soon be put out; their counsel is carried, but it is carried headlong. He that seeks only the praise of men gets that but for a day; while the religious man, who seeks only to be faithful to himself and his God, and represent on earth the

absolute true and just, all heedless of the applause of men, lives, and will forever live, in the admiration of mankind, and in "the pure eyes and perfect witness of all-judging Jove." Champollion painfully deciphers the names of the Egyptian kings who built the pyramids and swayed millions of men. For three thousand years that lettered muse, the sculptured stone, in silence kept the secret of their name. But the fugitive slave, a bondsman of that king, with religion in his heart, has writ his power on all the continents, and dotted the name of Moses on every green or snow-clad isle of either sea. That name shall still endure when the last stones of the last pyramid become gas and exhale to heaven. The peasant of Galilee has embosomed his own name in the religion of mankind, and the world will keep it forever. Foolish men! building your temple of fame on the expedients of to-day, and of selfishness and cunning and eloquent falsehood! That shall stand, — will it? On the frozen bosom of a northern lake, go build your palace of ice. Colonnade and capital, how they glitter in the light when the northern dawn is red about the pole, or the colder moon looks on your house of frost! "This will endure. Why carve out the granite, and painfully build upon the rock?" Ah me! at the touch of March, the ice-temple and its ice-foundation take the leap of Niagara; and in April the skiff of the fisherman finds no vestige of all that pomp and pride. But the temple of granite, — where is that? Ask Moses, ask Jesus, ask mankind, what power it is that lasts from age to age, when selfish ambition melts in the stream of time.

Well, we are all here for a great work, not merely to grow up and eat and drink, to have estates called after us and children born in our name. We are all here to be men; to do the most of human duty possible for us,

and so to have the most of human right and enjoy the most of human welfare. Religion is a good thing in itself; it is the betrothed bride of the spirit of man, to be loved for her own sweet sake; not a servant, to be taken for use alone. But it is the means to this end, — to strength of character, enlarging the little and greatening the great.

You and I shall have enough to suffer, most of us; enough to do. We shall have our travail, our temptation, perhaps our agony, but our triumph too.

O smooth-faced youths and maids! — your cheek and brow yet innocent of stain, — do you believe you shall pass through life and suffer naught? Trial will come on you; you shall have your agony and bloody sweat. Seek in the beginning for the strength which religion brings you, and you shall indeed be strong, powerful to suffer, and mighty also to do. I will not say your efforts will keep you from every error, every sin. When a boy, I might have thought so; as a man, I know better, by observation and my own experience too. Sin is an experiment that fails, — a stumble, not upright walking. Expect such mishaps, errors of the mind, errors of the conscience, errors of the affections, errors of the soul. What pine tree never lost a limb? The best mathematician now and then misses a figure, must rub out his work and start anew. The greatest poet must often mend a line, and will write faulty verses in the heat of song. Milton has many a scraggy line, and even good Homer sometimes nods. What defects are there in the proud works of Raphael and Angelo! Is there no failure in Mozart? In such a mighty work as this of life, — such a complication of forces within, of circumstances without, such imperfect guidance as the world can furnish in this work, — I should expect to miss the way

sometimes, and with painful feet, and heart stung by self-reproach, or grief, or shame, retread the way shamefaced and sad. The field that is ploughed all over by remorse, driving his team that breathe fire, yields not a faint harvest to the great Reaper's hand. Trust in God will do two things. It will keep you from many an error; nobody knows how great a gain this is till he has tried. Then it will help you after you have wandered from the way. Fallen, you will not despair, but rise the wiser and the stronger for the fall. Do you look for strength to your brave young hearts, and streams of life to issue thence? Here you shall find it, and with freshened life pass on your way. Religion is the Moses to smite the rock in the wilderness.

O bearded men, and women that have kept and hoarded much in your experienced hearts, you also seek for power to bear your crosses and to do your work. Religion will be the strength of your life, — you may do all things through this. When the last act of the mortal drama draws towards a close, you will look joyfully to the end, — not with fear, but with a triumphant joy.

There are two great things which make up the obvious part of life, — to do, to suffer. Behind both as cause, and before each as result, is one thing greater, — to BE. Religion is true being, normal life in yourself, in nature, in men, and in God.

OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON FROM THE TEXT —

The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. — 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

. . . THERE must be such a thing as communion between God and man. I mean, defining that provisionally, there must be a giving on God's part, and a taking on man's part. To state the matter thus is to make it evident, — since it follows from the nature of God; for from the necessity of his nature the Infinite Being must create and preserve the finite, and to the finite must, in its forms, give and communicate of his own kind. It is according to the infinite nature of God to do so; as according to the finite nature of light to shine, of fire to burn, of water to wet. It follows as well from the nature of man, as finite and derivative. From the necessity of his nature, he must receive existence and the means of continuance. He must get all his primitive power, which he starts with, and all his materials for secondary and automatic growth, from the primitive and infinite source. The mode of man's finite being is of necessity a receiving; of God's infinite being, of necessity a giving. You cannot conceive of any finite thing existing without God, the infinite basis and ground thereof; nor of God existing without something. God is the necessary logical condition of a world, its necessitating cause; a world, the necessary logical condition of God, his necessitated consequence. Communion between the two is a mutual necessity of nature, on God's part, and on

man's part. I mean it is according to the infinite perfection of God's nature to create, and so objectify himself, and then preserve and bless whatever he creates. So by his nature he creates, preserves, and gives. And it is according to the finite nature of man to take. So by his nature, soon as created, he depends and receives, and is preserved only by receiving from the infinite source.

That is the conclusion of modern metaphysical science. The stream of philosophy runs down from Aristotle to Hegel and Hickok, and breaks off with this conclusion; and I see not how it can be gainsaid. The statements are apodictic, self-evident at every step.

All that is painfully abstract; let me make it plainer if I can, — at least shoot one shaft more at the same mark from the other side. You start with yourself, with nothing but yourself. You are conscious of yourself; not of yourself perhaps as substance, surely as power to be, to do, to suffer. But you are conscious of yourself, not as self-originated at all, or as self-sustained alone; only as dependent, — first for existence, ever since for support.

You take the primary ideas of consciousness which are inseparable from it, the atoms of self-consciousness; amongst them you find the ideas of God. Carefully examined by the scrutinizing intellect, it is the idea of God as infinite, — perfectly powerful, wise, just, loving, holy, — absolute being, with no limitation. It is this which made you, made all; sustains you, sustains all; made your body, not by a single act, but by a series of acts extending over millions of years, — for man's body is the resultant of all created things; made your spirit, — your mind, your conscience, your affections, your soul, your will; appointed for each its natural mode of

action, set each at its several aim. Self-consciousness leads you to consciousness of God; at last to consciousness of infinite God. He is the primitive, whence you are the derivative. You must receive, or you could not be a finite man; and he must give, or he could not be the infinite God. Hence the communion is unavoidable, an ontological fact.

God must be omnipresent in space. There can be no mote that peoples the sunbeams, no spot on an insect's wing, no little cell of life which the microscope discovers in the seed-sporule of a moss, and brings to light, but God is there, in the mote that peoples the sunbeams, in that spot on the insect's wing, in that cell of life the microscope discovers in the seed-sporule of a moss.

God must be also omnipresent in time. There is no second of time elapsing now, there has been none millions of years ago, before the oldest stars began to burn, but God was in that second of time.

Follow the eye of the great space-penetrating telescope at Cambridge into the vast halls of creation, to the furthest nebulous spot seen in Orion's belt, — a spot whose bigness no natural mind can adequately conceive, and God is there. Follow the eye of the great sharply defining microscope at Berlin into some corner of creation, to that little dot, one of many millions that people an inch of stone, once animate with swarming life, a spot too small for mortal mind adequately to conceive, — and God is there.

Get you a metaphysic microscope of time to divide a second into its billionth part; God is in that. Get you a metaphysic telescope of time, to go back in millenniums as the glass in miles, and multiply the duration of a solar system by itself to get an immensity of time; still, God is there, in each elapsing second of that mil-

lennial stream of centuries, — his here conterminous with the all of space, his now coeval with the all of time.

Through all this space, in all this time, his being extends, "spreads undivided, operates unspent;" God in all his infinity, — perfectly powerful, perfectly wise, perfectly just, perfectly loving and holy. His being is an infinite activity, a creating, and so a giving of himself to the world. The world's being is a becoming, a being created and continued. This is so in the nebula of Orion's belt, and in the seed-sporule of the smallest moss. It is so now, and was the same millions of millenniums ago.

All this is philosophy, the unavoidable conclusion of the human mind. It is not the opinion of Coleridge and Kant, but their science; not what they guess, but what they know.

In virtue of this immanence of God in matter, we say the world is a revelation of God; its existence a show of his. Some good books picture to us the shows of things, and report in print the whisper of God which men have heard in the material world. They say that God is a good optician, — for the eye is a telescope and a microscope, the two in one; that he is a good chemist also, ordering all things "by measure and number and weight;" that he is a good mechanic, — for the machinery of the world, old as it is, is yet "constructed after the most approved principles of modern science." All that is true, but the finite mechanic is not in his work; he wakes it and then withdraws. God is in his work, —

> "As full, as perfect in a hair as heart;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Acts not by partial, but by general laws."

All nature works from within; the force that animates it is in every part. It was objected to Sir Isaac Newton's

philosophy, that it makes the world all mechanism, which goes without external help, and so is a universe without a God, — men thinking that he could not work at all in the world-machine, unless they saw the great hand on the crank now and then, or felt the jar of miraculous interposition when some comet swept along the sky. The objection was not just, for the manifold action of the universe is only the infinite God's mode of operation. Newton merely showed the mode of operation, — that it was constant and wonderful, not changing and miraculous; and so described a higher mode of operation than those men could fathom, or even reverence.

These things being so, all material things that are must needs be in communion with God; their creation was their first passive act of communion; their existence, a continual act of communion. As God is infinite, nothing can be without him, nothing without communion with him. The stone I sit on is in communion with God, — the pencil I write with, the gray field-fly reposing in the sunshine at my foot. Let God withdraw from the space occupied by the stone, the pencil, and fly, they cease to be; let him withdraw any quality of his nature therefrom, and they must cease to be. All must partake of him, immanent in each and yet transcending all.

In this communion these and all things receive after their kind, according to their degree of being and the mode thereof. The mineral, the vegetable, and the animal represent three modes of being, three degrees of existence; and hence so many modes and degrees of dependence on God and of communion with him. They are, they grow, they move and live in him, and by means of him, and only so. But none of these are conscious of this communion. In that threefold form of being there is no consciousness of God; they know nothing of

their dependence and their communion. The water-fowl, in the long pilgrimage of many a thousand miles, knows naught of Him who teaches its way

> "Along that pathless coast,
> The desert and illimitable air,
> Lone wandering, but not lost."

To the dog, man stands for God or devil. The "half-reasoning elephant" knows nobody and is conscious of nothing higher than his keeper, who rides upon his neck, pulling his ears with curved hook. All these are ignorant of God.

We come to man. Here he is, a body and a spirit. The vegetable is matter, and something more; the animal is vegetable also, and something more; man is animal likewise, and something more. So far as I am matter, a vegetable, an animal, — and I am each in part, — I have the appropriate communion of the vegetable, the mineral, the animal world. My body, this hand, for example, is subject to statical, dynamical, and vital laws. God is in this hand; without his infinite existence, its finite existence could not be. It is a hand only by its unconscious communion with him. It wills nothing; it knows nothing; yet all day long, and all the night, each monad thereof retains all the primary statical and dynamical qualities of matter; continually the blood runs through its arteries and veins, mysteriously forming this complicated and amazing work. Should God withdraw, it were a hand no more; the blood would cease to flow in vein and artery; no monad would retain its primary dynamical and static powers; each atom would cease to be.

All these things, — the stone, the pencil, and the fly, and hand, are but passive and unconscious communicants

of God; they are bare pipes alone into which his omnipotence flows. Yes, they are poor, brute things, which know him not, nor cannot ever know. The stone and pencil know not themselves; this marvellous hand knows naught; and the fly never says, reasoning with itself, "Lo, here am I, an individual and a conscious thing, sucking the bosom of the world." It never separates the Not-me and the Me. But I am conscious; I know myself, and through myself know God. I am a mind to think, a conscience to perceive the just and right; I am a heart to love, a soul to know of God. For communion with my God I have other faculties than what he gives to stone and pencil, hand and fly.

Put together all these things which are not body, and call them spirit: this spirit as a whole is dependent on God, for creation first, and for existence ever since; it lives only by communion with him. So far as I am a body, I obviously depend on God, and am no more self-created and self-sufficing than the pencil or the fly. So far as I am a spirit, I depend equally on him. Should God withdraw himself or any of his qualities from my mind, I could not think; from conscience, I should know nothing of the right; from the heart, there could be no love; from the soul, there could be no holiness, no faith in him that made it. Thus the very existence of the spirit is a dependence on God, and so far a communion with him.

I cannot wholly separate my spirit from this communion, for that would be destruction of the spirit, annihilation, which is in no man's power. Only the Infinite can create or annihilate an atom of matter or a monad of spirit. There is a certain amount of communion of the spirit with God, which is not conscious; that lies quite beyond my control. I "break into the bloody house of

life," and my spirit rushes out of the body; and while the static and dynamic laws of nature reassume their sway over my material husk, rechanging it to dust, still I am, I depend, and so involuntarily commune with God. Even the popular theology admits this truth, for it teaches that the living wicked still commune with God through pain and wandering and many a loss; and that the wicked dead commune with him through hell against their will, as with their will the heavenly saints through heavenly joy.

I cannot end this communion with my God; but I can increase it, greaten it largely, if I will. The more I live my higher normal life, the more do I commune with God. If I live only as mere body, I have only corporeal and unconscious communion, as a mineral, a vegetable, an animal, — no more. As children, we all begin as low as this. The child unborn or newly born has no self-consciousness, — knows nothing of its dependence, its spontaneous communion with its God, whereon by laws it depends for being and continuance. As we outgrow our babyhood we are conscious of ourselves, — distinguish the Me and the Not-me, and learn at length of God.

I live as spirit, I have spiritual communion with God. Depend on him I must; when I become self-conscious, I feel that dependence, and know of this communion, whereby I receive from him.

The quantity of my receipt is largely under my control. As I will, I can have less or more. I cultivate my mind, greatening its quantity; by all its growth I have so much more communion with my Father; each truth I get is a point common to him and me. I cultivate my conscience, increasing my moral sense; each atom of justice that I get is another point common with the

Deity. So I cultivate and enlarge my affections; each grain of love — philanthropic or but friendly — is a new point common to me and God. Then, too, I cultivate and magnify my soul, greatening my sense of holiness by fidelity to all my nature; and all that I thus acquire is a new point I hold in common with the Infinite. I earnestly desire his truth, his justice, his holiness and love, and he communicates the more. Thus I have a fourfold voluntary consciousness of God through my mind and conscience, heart and soul; know him as the absolutely true and just and amiable and holy; and thereby have a fourfold voluntary communion with my God. He gives of his infinite kind; I receive in my finite mode, taking according to my capacity to receive.

I may diminish the quantity of this voluntary communion. For it is as possible to stint the spirit of its God as to starve the body of its food; only not to the final degree, — to destruction of the spirit. This fact is well known. You would not say that Judas had so much and so complete communion with God as Jesus had. And if Jesus had yielded to the temptation in the story, all would declare that for the time he must diminish the income of God upon his soul. For unfaithfulness in any part lessens the quantity and mars the quality of our communion with the Infinite.

In most various ways men may enlarge the power to communicate with God; complete and normal life is the universal instrument thereof. Here is a geologist chipping the stones, or studying the earthquake-waves; here a metaphysician chipping the human mind, studying its curious laws, — psychology, logic, ontology; here is a merchant, a mechanic, a poet, each diligently using his intellectual gift; and as they acquire the power to think, by so much more do they hold intellectual communion

with the thought of God,—their finite mind communing with the Infinite. My active power of understanding, imagination, reason, is the measure of my intellectual communion with him.

A man strives to know the everlasting right, to keep a conscience void of all offence; his inward eye is pure and single; all is true to the eternal right. His moral powers continually expand, and by so much more does he hold communion with his God. As far as it can see, his finite conscience reads in the book the eternal right of God. A man's power of conscience is the measure of his moral communion with the Infinite.

I repress my animal self-love, I learn to be well-tempered, disinterested, benevolent, friendly to a few, and philanthropic unto all; my heart is ten times greater than ten years ago. To him that hath shall be given according to the quantity and quality of what he has, and I communicate with God so much the more. The greatness of my heart is the measure of my affectional communion with him.

I cultivate the religious faculty within me, keeping my soul as active as my sense; I quicken my consciousness of the dear God; I learn to reverence and trust and love, seeking to keep his every rule of conduct for my sense and soul; I make my soul some ten times larger than it was, and just as I enhance its quantity and quality, so much the more do I religiously commune with God. The power of my religious sense is the measure of my communion with my Father. I feed on this, and all the more I take, the more I grow, and still the more I need.

In all this there is nothing miraculous, nothing mysterious, nothing strange. From his mother's breast it is the largest child that takes the most.

At first a man's spiritual communion is very little, is most exceeding small; but in normal life it becomes more and more continually. Some of you, grown men, can doubtless remember your religious experience when you were children. A very little manna was food enough for your baby-soul. But your character grew more and more, your intellectual, moral, and religious life continually became greater and greater; when you needed much, you had no lack, when little, there seemed nothing over. Demand and supply are still commensurate; nothing is more under our control than the amount of this voluntary communion with God.

> "Misfortunes, do the best we can,
> Will come to great and small."

We cannot help that, but we can progressively enlarge the amount of inspiration we receive from Heaven, spite of the disappointments and sorrows of life, — nay, by means thereof.

> "Thy home is with the humble, Lord!
> The simple are thy rest;
> Thy lodging is in childlike hearts,
> Thou makest there thy nest."

Sometimes a man makes a conscious and serious effort to receive and enlarge this communion. He looks over his daily life; his eye runs back to childhood, and takes in all the main facts of his outward and inward history. He sees much to mend, something also to approve. Here he erred through passion, there sinned by ambition; the desire from within leagued with opportunity from without, making temptation too strong for him. He is penitent for the sin that was voluntary, or for the heedlessness whereby he went astray, — sorrowful at his defeat. But he remembers the manly part of him, and with new

resolution braces himself for new trials. He thinks of the powers that lie unused in his own nature; he looks out at the examples of lofty men; his soul is stirred to its deeper depths. A new image of beauty rises living from that troubled sea, and the ideal of human loveliness is folded in his arms. "This fair ideal," says he, "shall be mine. I also will be as whole and beautiful. Ah, me! how can I ever get such lovely life?" Then he thinks of the eternal wisdom, the eternal justice, the eternal love, the eternal holiness, which surrounds him, and now fills up his consciousness, waiting to bless. He reaches out his arms towards that infinite Motherliness which created him at first and preserved him ever since; which surpassed when he fell short, furnishing the great plan of his life and the world's life, and is of all things perfect cause and providence. Then, deeply roused in every part, he communicates with the infinite mind and conscience, heart and soul. He is made calmer by the thought of the immense tranquillity which enfolds the nervous world in its all-embracing, silent arms. He is comforted by the motherly aspect of that infinite eye, which never slumbers in its watch over the suffering of each great and every little thing, converting it all to good. He is elevated to confidence in himself, when he feels so strong in the never-ending Love which makes, sustains, and guides the world of matter, beasts, and men; makes from perfect motives, sustains with perfect providence, and guides by perfect love to never-ending bliss. Yea, the tranquillity, pity, love, of the infinite Mother enters into his soul, and he is tranquil, soothed, and strong, once more. He has held communion with his God, and the Divine has given of the Deity's own kind. His artistic fancy and his plastic hand have found an Apollo in that pliant human block.

That is a prayer. I paint the process out in words,—they are not my prayer itself, only the cradle of my blessed heavenly babe. I paint it not in words, — it is still my prayer, not less the aspiration of my upward-flying soul. I carry my child cradled only in my arms.

I have this experience in my common and daily life, with no unusual grief to stir, or joy to quicken, or penitence to sting me into deep emotion; then my prayer is only a border round my daily life, to keep the web from ravelling away through constant use and wear; or else a fringe of heaven, whereby I beautify my common consciousness and daily work.

But there strikes for me a greater hour; some new joy binds me to this, or puts another generation into my arms; another heart sheds its life into my own; some great sorrow sends me in upon myself and God; out of the flower of self-indulgence the bee of remorse stings me into agony. And then I rise from out my common consciousness, and take a higher, wider flight into the vast paradise of God, and come back laden from the new and honeyed fields wherein I have a newer and fresher life and sweeter communings with loftier loveliness than I had known before. Thus does the man that will, hold commune with his Father, face to face, and get great income from the Soul of all.

In all this there is nothing miraculous; there has been no change on God's part, but a great change on man's. We have received what he is universally giving. So in winter it is clear and cold, the winds are silent, clouds gather over the city's face, and all is still. How cold it is! In a few hours the warmth steals out from the central fire, — the earth's domestic, household hearth; the clouds confine it in those airy walls, that it flee not off, nor spread to boundless space; the frost becomes

the less intense, and men are gladdened with the milder day. So, when magnetic bars in time have lost their force, men hang them up in the line of the meridian, and the great loadstone, the earth, from her own breast restores their faded magnetism. Thus is it that human souls communicate with the great central Fire and Light of all the world, the Loadstone of the universe, and thus recruit, grow young again, and so are blessed and strong.

There may be a daily, conscious communion with God, marked by reverence, gratitude, aspiration, trust, and love; it will not be the highest prayer.

> "'T is the most difficult of tasks to keep
> Heights that the soul is competent to gain."

And the highest prayer is no common event in a man's life. Ecstasy, rapture, great delight in prayer, or great increase thereby, — they are the rarest things in the life of any man. They should be rare. The tree blossoms but once a year; blooms for a week, and then fulfils and matures its fruit in the long months of summer and of harvest-time, — fruit for a season, and seed for many an age. The sun is but a moment at meridian. Jesus had his temptation but once, but once his agony, — the two foci round which his beauteous ellipse was drawn. The intensest consciousness of friendship does not last long. They say men have but once the ecstasy of love; human nature could not bear such a continual strain. So all the blossomings of rapture must needs be short. The youthful ecstasy of love leads man and maid by moonlight up the steep, sheer cliffs of life, "while all below the world in mist lies lost;" then, in the daylight of marriage they walk serenely on, along the high tableland of mortal life, and though continually greatening

their connubial love and joy, it is without the early ecstasy.

Men sometimes seek to have their daily prayer high and ecstatic as their highest hour and walk with God; it cannot be, it should not be. Some shut themselves up in convents to make religion their business, all their life, — to make an act of prayer their only act. They always fail; their religion dwindles into ritual service, and no more; their act of prayer is only kneeling with the knees and talking talk with windy tongues. A Methodist, in great ecstasy of penitence or fear, becomes a member of a church. He all at once is filled with rapturous delight; religious joy blossoms in his face and glitters in his eye. How glad is the converted man!

> "Then when he kneels to meditate,
> Sweet thoughts come o'er his soul,
> Countless and bright and beautiful,
> Beyond his own control."

But by and by his rapture dies away, and he is astonished that he has no such ecstasy as before. He thinks that he has "fallen from grace," has "grieved away" the Holy Ghost, and tries by artificial excitement to bring back what will not come without a new occasion. Certain religious convictions once made my heart spring in my bosom. No wit is not so. The fresh leaping of the heart will only come from a fresh conquest of new truth. The old man loves his wife a thousand times better than when, for the first time, he kissed her gracious mouth; but his heart burns no longer as when he first saw his paradise in her reciprocating eye. The tree of religious consciousness is not in perpetual blossom, — but now in leaf, now flower, now fruit.

It is a common error to take no heed of this voluntary communion with God, to live intent on business or on pleasure, careful, troubled about many things, and seldom heed the one thing needed most; to take that as it comes. If all this mortal life turned out just as we wished it, this error would be still more common; only a few faculties would get their appropriate discipline. Men walking only on a smooth and level road use the same muscles always, and march like mere machines. But disappointment comes on us. Sorrow checks our course, and we are forced to think and feel, — must march now up hill, and then down, shifting the strain from part to part. In mere prosperity most men are contented to enlarge their estate, their social rank, their daily joy, and lift their children's faces to the vulgar level of the vulgar flood whereon their fathers float. There comes some new adventure to change and mend all this. Now it is a great joy, success not looked for; some kindred soul is made one with us, and on the pinions of instinctive connubial love we fly upwards and enlarge our intercourse with God, — the object of passion a communion angel to lead the human soul to a higher seat in the universe and a more intimate acquaintance with the Soul of all. Sometimes the birth of a new immortal into our arms does this, and on the pinions of instinctive affection men soar up to heaven and bring back healing on their wings, — the object of affection the communion angel to convey and welcome them to heaven.

Sometimes it is none of these, but sorrow, grief, and disappointment, that do this. I set my heart upon a special thing; it is not mine, or if I get the honor, the money, the social rank I sought, it was one thing in my eye, and another in my grasp. The one bird which I saw

in the bush was worth ten like that I hold in my hand. The things I loved are gone, — the maid, the lover, husband, wife, or child; the mortal is taken from longing arms. The heart looks up for what can never die. Then there is a marriage and a birth, not into your arms, but out of them and into heaven; and the sorrow and the loss stir you to woo and win that object of the soul which cannot pass away. Your sorrow takes you on her wings, and you go up higher than before; higher than your success, higher than friendship's daily wing ascends; higher than your early love for married mate had ever borne you up; higher than the delight in your first-born child or latest born. You have a new communion with your Father, and get a great amount of inspiration from him.

This is the obvious use of such vicissitudes, and seems a portion of their final cause. In the artificial, ecclesiastical life of monasteries, men aim to reproduce this part of nature's discipline, and so have times of watching, fasting, bodily torture. But in common life such discipline asks not our consent to come.

As I look over your faces and recall the personal history of those I know, I see how universal is this disappointment. But it has not made you more melancholy and less manly men; life is not thereby the less a blessing, and the more a load. With no sorrows you would be more sorrowful. For all the sorrows that man has faithfully contended with, he shall sail into port deeper fraught with manliness. The wife and mother at thirty years of age imprisoned in her chair, her hands all impotent to wipe a tear away, does not suffer for nothing. She has thereby been taught to taste the fruits of sweeter communion with her God. These disappointments are rounds in the ladder whereby we climb to heaven.

In cities there is less to help us communicate with God than in the fields. These walls of brick and stone, this artificial ground we stand on, all reminds us of man; even the city horse is a machine. But in the country it is God's ground beneath our feet; God's hills on every side; his heaven, broad, blue, and boundless, overhead; and every bush and every tree, the morning song of earliest birds, the chirp of insects at mid-day, the solemn stillness of the night, and the mysterious hosts of stars that all night long climb up the sky, or silently go down, — these continually affect the soul, and cause us all to feel the infinite presence, and draw near to that; and earth seems less to rest in space than in the love of God. So, in cities, men build a great church, — at London, Paris, Venice, or at Rome, — seeking to compensate for lack of the natural admonitions of the woods and sky; and, to replace the music of the fields and nature's art, enlist the painter's plastic hand, and the musician's sweetest skill.

All that seek religion are in search for communion with God. What is there between him and thee? Nothing but thyself. Each can have what inspiration each will take. God is continually giving; he will not withhold from you or me. As much ability as he has given, as much as you have enlarged your talent by manly use, so much will he fill with inspiration. I hold up my little cup. He fills it full. If yours is greater, rejoice in that, and bring it faithfully to the same urn. He who fills the violet with beauty, and the sun with light, — who gave to Homer his gift of song, such reason to Aristotle, and to Jesus the manly gifts of justice and the womanly grace of love and faith in him, — will not fail to inspire also you and me. Were your little cup to become as large as the Pacific sea, he still would fill it full.

There is such a thing as having a godly heart, a desire to conform to the ideal of man in all things, and to be true to him that is "of all Creator and Defence." He who has that is sure of conscious spiritual communion with the Father; sure to find his character enlarging in every manly part; sure to be supplied with unexpected growth, and to hold more of the divine; sure of the voluntary inspiration which is proper to the self-conscious man.

There are continual means of help even for men who dwell hedged up in towns. There are always living voices which can speak to us. A good book helps one; this feeds his soul for a time on the fair words of David, Paul, or John, Taylor, À Kempis, Wordsworth, Emerson; that, on the life of him who gives a name to Christendom. He who has more than I will help me; him that has less, I shall help. Some men love certain solemn forms, as aids to their devotion; I hope that they are helped thereby, — that baptism helps the sprinkler or the wet; that circumcision aids the Jew, and sacrifice the heathen who offers it. But these are not the communion, only at most its vehicle. Communion is the meeting of the finite and the infinite.

If a man have a truly pious soul, then his whole inward, outward life, will at length become religion; for the disposition to be true to God's law will appear the same in his business as in his Sunday vow. His whole work will be an act of faith, he will grow greater, better, and more refined by common life, and hold higher communion with the Ever-present; the Sun of righteousness will beautify his every day.

God is partial to no one, foreign to none. Did he inspire the vast soul of Moses, — the tender hearts of lowly saints in every clime and every age? He waits to come

down on you and me, a continual Pentecost of inspiration. Here in the crowded vulgar town, everywhere, is a Patmos, a Sinai, a Gethsemane; the infinite Mother spreads wide her arms to fold us to that universal breast, ready to inspire your soul. God's world of truth is ready for your intellect; his ocean of justice waits to flow in upon your conscience; and all his heaven of love broods continually by night and day over each heart and every soul. From that dear bounty shall we be fed. The motherly love invites all, — as much communion as we will, as much inspiration as our gifts and faithfulness enable us to take. He is not far from any one of us. Shall we not all go home, — the prodigal rejoice with him that never went astray? Even the consciousness of sin brings some into nearness with the Father, tired of their draff and husks; and then it is a blessed sin. Sorrow also brings some, and then it is a blessed grief; joy yet others, and then it is blessed thrice. In this place is one greater than the temple, greater than all temples; for the human nature of the lowliest child transcends all human history. And we may live so that all our daily life shall be a continual approach and mounting up towards God. What is the noblest life? Not that born in the most famous place, acquiring wealth and fame and rank and power over matter and over men; but that which, faithful to itself continually, holds communion with the Infinite, and, thence receiving of God's kind, in mortal life displays the truth, the justice, holiness, and love of God.

> "O, blessed be our trials then,
> This deep in which we lie;
> And blessed be all things that teach
> God's dear infinity."

THE RELATION OF JESUS TO HIS AGE AND THE AGES.

Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? — John vii. 48.

In all the world there is nothing so remarkable as a great man; nothing so rare, nothing which so well repays study. Human nature is loyal at its heart, and is, always and everywhere, looking for this its true earthly sovereign. We sometimes say that our institutions, here in America, do not require great men; that we get along better without than with such. But let a real great man light on our quarter of the planet, let us understand him, and straightway these democratic hearts of ours burn with admiration and with love. We wave in his words, like corn in the harvest wind. We should rejoice to obey him, for he would speak what we need to hear. Men are always half expecting such a man. But when he comes, — the real great man that God has been preparing, — men are disappointed; they do not recognize him. He does not enter the city through the gates which expectants had crowded. He is a fresh fact, brand new, not exactly like any former fact; therefore men do not recognize nor acknowledge him. His language is strange, and his form unusual. He looks revolutionary, and pulls down ancient walls to build his own temple, or at least splits old rocks asunder, and quarries anew fresh granite and marble.

There are two classes of great men. Now and then some arise whom all acknowledge to be great, soon as

they appear. Such men have what is true in relation to the wants and expectations of to-day. They say what many men wished but had not words for; they translate into thought what, as a dim sentiment, lay a burning in many a heart, but could not get entirely written out into consciousness. These men find a welcome. Nobody misunderstands them. The world follows at their chariot-wheels, and flings up its cap and shouts its huzzas; for the world is loyal, and follows its king when it sees and knows him. The good part of the world follows the highest man it comprehends; the bad, whoever serves its turn.

But there is another class of men so great that all cannot see their greatness. They are in advance of men's conjectures, higher than their dreams, too good to be actual, think some. Therefore, say many, there must be some mistake; this man is not so great as he seems; nay, he is no great man at all, but an impostor. These men have what is true, not merely in relation to the wants and expectations of men here and to-day, but what is true in relation to the universe, to eternity, to God. They do not speak what you and I have been trying to say, and cannot; but what we shall one day, years hence, wish to say, after we have improved and grown up to man's estate.

Now, it seems to me the men of this latter class, when they come, can never meet the approbation of the censors and guides of public opinion. Such as wished for a new great man had a superstition of the last one in their minds. They expected the new to be just like the old, but he is altogether unlike. Nature is rich, but not rich enough to waste anything. So there are never two great men very strongly similar. Nay, this new great man, perhaps, begins by destroying much that the old

one built up with tears and prayers. He shows, at first, the limitations and defects of the former great man; calls in question his authority. He refuses all masters; bows not to tradition; and, with seeming irreverence, laughs in the face of the popular idols. How will the "respectable men," — the men of a few good rules and those derived from their fathers, "the best of men and the wisest," — how will they regard this new great man? They will see nothing remarkable in him except that he is fluent and superficial, dangerous and revolutionary. He disturbs their notions of order; he shows that the institutions of society are not perfect; that their imperfections are not of granite or marble, but only of words written on soft wax, which may be erased and others written thereon anew. He shows that such imperfect institutions are less than one great man. The guides and censors of public opinion will not honor such a man, they will hate him. Why not? Some others, not half so well bred nor well furnished with precedents, welcome the new great man, — welcome his ideas, welcome his person. They say, "Behold a prophet!"

When Jesus, the son of Mary, — a poor woman, wife of Joseph the carpenter, in the little town of Nazareth, — when he "began to be about thirty years old," and began also to open his mouth in the synagogues and the highways, nobody thought him a great man at all, as it seems. "Who are you?" said the guardians of public opinion. He found men expecting a great man. This, it seems, was the common opinion, that a great man was to arise, and save the Church, and save the State. They looked back to Moses, a divine man of antiquity, whose great life had passed into the world, and to whom men had done honor in various ways, — amongst others, by telling all sorts of wonders he wrought,

and declaring that none could be so great again; none get so near to God. They looked back also to the prophets, a long line of divine men, so they reckoned, but less than the awful Moses; his stature was far above the nation, who hid themselves in his shadow. Now, the well-instructed children of Abraham thought the next great man must be only a copy of the last, repeat his ideas, and work in the old fashion. Sick men like to be healed by the medicine which helped them the last time; at least, by the customary drugs which are popular.

In Judea, there were three parties of men, distinctly marked. There were the Conservatives — they represented the church, tradition, ecclesiastical or theocratical authority. They adhered to the words of the old books, the forms of the old rites, the tradition of the elders. "Nobody but a Jew can be saved," said they; "he only by circumcision, and the keeping of the old formal law; God likes that, he accepts nothing else." These were the Pharisees, with their servants the Scribes. Of this class were the priests and the Levites in the main, the national party, the native Hebrew party of that time. They had tradition, Moses, and the prophets; they believed in tradition, Moses, and the prophets, at least in public; what they believed in private God knew, and so did they. I know nothing of that.

Then there was the indifferent party, — the Sadducees, the State. They had wealth, and they believed in it, both in public and private too. They had a more generous and extensive cultivation than the Pharisees. They had intercourse with foreigners, and understood the writers of Ionia and Athens which the Pharisee held in abhorrence. These were sleek, respectable men, who, in part, disbelieved the Jewish theology. It is no very great merit to disbelieve even in the devil, unless you

have a positive faith in God to take up your affections. The Sadducee believed neither in angel nor resurrection, — not at all in the immortality of the soul. He believed in the State, in the laws, the constables, the prisons, and the axe. In religious matters it seems the Pharisee had a positive belief, only it was a positive belief in a great mistake. In religious matters the Sadducee had no positive belief at all, — not even in an error; at least, some think so. His distinctive affirmation was but a denial. He believed what he saw with his eyes, touched with his fingers, tasted with his tongue. He never saw, felt, nor tasted immortal life; he had no belief therein. There was once a heathen Sadducee who said, "My right arm is my God!"

There was likewise a party of come-outers. They despaired of the State, and the Church too, and turned off into the wilderness, "where the wild asses quench their thirst," building up their organizations free, as they hoped, from all ancient tyrannies. The Bible says nothing directly of these men in its canonical books. It is a curious omission; but two Jews, each acquainted with foreign writers, Josephus and Philo, give an account of these. These were the Essenes, an ascetic sect, hostile to marriage, at least many of them, who lived in a sort of association by themselves, and had all things in common.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees had no great living and ruling ideas, — none I mean which represented man, his hopes, wishes, affections, his aspirations, and power of progress. That is no very rare case, perhaps you will say, for a party in the Church or the State to have no such ideas, but they had not even a plausible substitute for such ideas. They seemed to have no faith in man, — in his divine nature, his power of improvement.

The Essenes had ideas; had a positive belief; had faith in man; but it was weakened in a great measure by their machinery. They, like the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were imprisoned in their organization, and probably saw no good out of their own party lines.

It is a plain thing that no one of these three parties would accept, acknowledge, or even perceive the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth. His ideas were not their notions. He was not the man they were looking for; not at all the Messiah, the anointed one of God, which they wanted. The Sadducee expected no new great man unless it was a Roman quæstor or procurator; the Pharisees looked for a Pharisee stricter than Gamaliel; the Essenes for an Ascetic. It is so now. Some seem to think that if Jesus were to come back to the earth, he would preach Unitarian sermons, from a text out of the Bible, and prove his divine mission and the everlasting truths, — the truths of necessity that he taught, — in the Unitarian way, by telling of the miracles he wrought eighteen hundred years ago; that he would prove the immortality of the soul by the fact of his own corporeal resurrection. Others seem to think that he would deliver homilies of a severer character; would rate men roundly about total depravity, and tell of unconditional election, salvation without works, and imputed righteousness, and talk of hell till the women and children fainted, and the knees of men smote together for trembling. Perhaps both would be mistaken.

So it was then. All these three classes of men, imprisoned in their prejudices and superstitions were hostile. The Pharisees said, "We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is. He blasphemeth Moses and the prophets; yea, he hath a devil, and is mad, why hear him?" The Sad-

ducees complained that "he stirred up the people;" so he did. The Essenes, no doubt, would have it that he was "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Tried by these three standards, the judgment was true; what could he do to please these three parties? Nothing, — nothing that he would do. So they hated him; all hated him, and sought to destroy him. The cause is plain. He was so deep they could not see his profoundness; too high for their comprehension; too far before them for their sympathy. He was not the great man of the day. He found all organizations against him, — Church and State. Even John the Baptist, a real prophet, but not the prophet, doubted if Jesus was the one to be followed. If Jesus had spoken for the Pharisees, they would have accepted his speech and the speaker too. Had he favored the Sadducees, he had been a great man in their camp, and Herod would gladly have poured wine for the eloquent Galilean, and have satisfied the carpenter's son with purple and fine linen. Had he praised the Essenes, uttering their Shibboleth, they also would have paid him his price, have made him the head of their association perhaps, — at least, have honored him in their way. He spoke for none of these. Why should they honor or even tolerate him? It were strange had they done so. Was it through any fault or deficiency of Jesus that these men refused him? Quite the reverse. The rain falls and the sun shines on the evil and the good; the work of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness is before all men, revealing the invisible things; yet the fool hath said, ay, said in his heart, "There is no God!"

Jesus spoke not for the prejudices of such, and therefore they rejected him. But as he spoke truths for man, truths from God, truths adapted to man's condition

Bad Composition

there, to man's condition everywhere and always, when the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes went away, their lips curling with scorn, when they gnashed on one another with their teeth, there were noble men and humble women who had long awaited the consolation of Israel, and they heard him, heard him gladly. Yes, they left all to follow him. Him? no, it was not him they followed; it was God in him they obeyed, the God of truth, the God of love.

There were men not counted in the organized sects, — men weary of absurdities, thirsting for the truth, sick, they knew not why nor of what, yet none the less sick, and waiting for the angel who should heal them, though by troubled waters and remedies unknown. These men had not the prejudices of a straitly organized and narrow sect. Perhaps they had not its knowledge, or its good manners. They were "unlearned and ignorant men," those early followers of Christ. Nay, Jesus himself had no extraordinary culture, as the world judges of such things. His townsmen wondered, on a famous occasion, how he had learned to read. He knew little of theologies, it would seem; the better for him, perhaps. No doubt the better for us that he insisted on none. He knew they were not religion. The men of Galilee did not need theology. The youngest scribe in the humblest theological school at Jerusalem, if such a thing were in those days, could have furnished theology enough to believe in a lifetime. They did need religion; they did see it as Jesus unfolded its loveliness; they did welcome it when they saw; welcome it in their hearts.

If I were a poet, as some are born, and skilled to paint with words what shall stand out as real, to live before the eye, and then dwell in the affectionate memory forever, I would tell of the audience which heard the Sermon

on the Mount, which listened to the parables, the rebukes, the beautiful beatitudes. They were plain men, and humble women; many of them foolish like you and me; some of them sinners. But they all had hearts, had souls, — all of them, — hearts made to love, souls expectant of truth. When he spoke, some said, no doubt, "That is a new thing, that the true worshipper shall worship in spirit and in truth, as well here as in Jerusalem, now as well as any time; that also is a hard saying, Love your enemies; forgive them, though seventy times seven times they smite and offend you, — that notion that the law and the prophets are contained, all that is essentially religious thereof, in one precept, Love men as yourself, and God with all your might. This differs a good deal from the Pharisaic orthodoxy of the synagogue. That is a bold thing, presumptuous and revolutionary, to say, — I am greater than the temple, wiser than Solomon, a better symbol of God than both." But there was something deeper than Jewish orthodoxy in their heart, something that Jewish orthodoxy could not satisfy; and what was yet more troublesome to ecclesiastical guides, something that Jewish orthodoxy could not keep down, nor even cover up. Sinners were converted at his reproof. They felt he rebuked whom he loved. Yet his pictures of sin, and sinners too, were anything but flattering. There was small comfort in them. Still it was not the publicans and harlots who laid their hands on the place where their hearts should be, saying, "You hurt our feelings," and "We can't bear you!" Nay, they pondered his words, repenting in tears. He showed them their sin; its cause, its consequence, its cure. To them he came as a Saviour, and they said, "Thou art well-come," — those penitent Magdalenes weeping at his feet.

It would be curious could we know the mingled emotions that swayed the crowd which rolled up around Jesus, following him, as the tides obey the moon, wherever he went; curious to see how faces looked doubtful at first as he began to speak, at Tabor or Gennesareth, Capernaum or Gischala, then how the countenance of some lowered and grew black with thunder suppressed but cherished, while the face of others shone as a branch of stars seen through some disparted cloud in a night of fitful storms, a moment seen and then withdrawn. It were curious to see how gradually many discordant feelings, passion, prejudice, and pride, were hushed before the tide of melodious religion he poured out around him, baptizing anew saint and sinner, and old and young, into one brotherhood of a common soul, into one immortal service of the universal God; to see how this young Hebrew maid, deep-hearted, sensitive, enthusiastic, self-renouncing, intuitive of heavenly truth, rich as a young vine, with clustering affections just purpling into ripeness, — how she seized, first and all at once, the fair ideal, and with generous bosom confidingly embraced it too; how that old man, gray-bearded, with baldness on his head, full of precepts and precedents, the lore of his fathers, the experience of a hard life, logical, slow, calculating, distrustful, remembering much and fearing much, but hoping a little, confiding only in the fixed, his reverence for the old deepening as he himself became of less use, — to see how he received the glad inspirations of the joiner's son, and wondering felt his youth steal slowly back upon his heart, reviving aspirations long ago forgot, and then the crimson tide of early hope come gushing, tingling on through every limb; to see how the young man halting between principle and passion, not yet petrified into worldliness, but struggling,

uncertain, half reluctant, with those two serpents, Custom and Desire, that beautifully twined about his arms and breast and neck their wormy folds, concealing underneath their burnished scales the dragon's awful strength, the viper's poison fang, — the poor youth caressing their snaky crests, and toying with their tongues of flame, — to see how he slowly, reluctantly, amid great questionings of heart, drank in the words of truth, and then, obedient to the angel in his heart, shook off, as ropes of sand, that hideous coil, and trod the serpents underneath his feet. All this, it were curious, ay, instructive too, could we but see.

They heard him with welcome various as their life. The old men said, "It is Moses or Elias; it is Jeremiah, one of the old prophets arisen from the dead, for God makes none such, now-a-days, in the sterile dotage of mankind." The young men and maidens doubtless it was that said, "This is the Christ; the desire of the nations; the hope of the world, the great new prophet; the Son of David; the Son of man; yes, the son of God. He shall be our king." Human nature is loyal, and follows its king soon as it knows him. Poor lost sheep! the children of men look always for their guide, though so often they look in vain.

How he spoke, words deep and piercing; rebukes for the wicked, doubly rebuking, because felt to have come out from a great, deep, loving heart. His first word was, perhaps, "Repent," but with the assurance that the kingdom of God was here and now, within reach of all. How his doctrines, those great truths of nature, commended themselves to the heart of each, of all simple-souled men looking for the truth! He spoke out of his experience; of course into theirs. He spoke great doctrines, truths vast as the soul, eternal as God, winged

with beauty from the loveliness of his own life. Had he spoken for the Jews alone, his words had perished with that people; for that time barely, the echo of his name had died away in his native hamlet; for the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, you and I had heard of him but as a Rabbi, — nay, had never been blest by him at all. Words for a nation, an age, a sect, are of use in their place, yet they soon come to nought. But as he spoke for eternity, his truths ride on the wings of time; as he spoke for man, they are welcome, beautiful, and blessing, wherever man is found, and so must be till man and time shall cease.

He looked not back, as the Pharisee, save for illustrations and examples. He looked forward for his direction. He looked around for his work. There it lay, the harvest plenteous, the laborers few. It is always so. He looked not to men for his idea, his word to speak; as little for their applause. He looked in to God, for guidance, wisdom, strength; and as water in the wilderness, at the stroke of Moses, in the Hebrew legend, so inspiration came at his call, — a mighty stream of truth for the nation, faint, feeble, afraid, and wandering for the promised land; drink for the thirsty, and cleansing for the unclean.

But he met opposition, — oh yes, enough of it. How could it be otherwise? It must be so. The very soul of peace, he brought a sword. His word was a consuming fire. The Pharisees wanted to be applauded, commended; to have their sect, their plans, their traditions praised and flattered. His word to them was "Repent;" of them, to the people, "Such righteousness admits no man to the kingdom of heaven; they are a deceitful prophecy, blind guides, hypocrites; not sons of Abraham, but children of the devil." They could not bear him.

No wonder at it; he was the aggressor, — had carried the war into the very heart of their system. They turned out of their company a man whose blindness he healed, because he confessed that fact. They made a law that all who believed on him should also be cast out. Well they might hate him, those old Pharisees. His existence was their reproach; his preaching their trial; his life with its outward goodness, his piety within, was their condemnation. The man was their ruin, and they knew it. The cunning can see their own danger, but it is only men wise in mind, or men simple of heart, that can see their real, permanent safety and defence, — never the cunning, neither then, neither now.

Jesus looked to God for his truth, his great doctrines, — not his own, private, personal, depending on his idiosyncrasies, and therefore only subjectively true, but God's, universal, everlasting, the absolute religion. I do not know that he did not teach some errors also, along with it. I care not if he did. It is by his truths that I know him, the absolute religion he taught and lived, — by his highest sentiments that he is to be appreciated. He had faith in God, and obeyed God; hence his inspiration, great in proportion to the greater endowment, moral and religious, which God gave him, great likewise in proportion to his perfect obedience. He had faith in man none the less. Who ever yet had faith in God that had none in man? I know not. Surely no inspired prophet. As Jesus had faith in man, so he spoke to men. Never yet, in the wide world, did a prophet arise, appealing with a noble heart and a noble life to the soul of goodness in man, but that soul answered to the call. It was so most eminently with Jesus. The Scribes and Pharisees could not understand by what authority he taught. Poor Pharisees! how could they?

His phylacteries were no broader than those of another man; nay, perhaps he had no phylacteries at all, nor even a broad-bordered garment. Men did not salute him in the market-place, sandals in hand, with their "Rabbi! Rabbi!" Could such men understand by what authority he taught? no more than they dared answer his questions. They that knew him felt he had authority quite other than that claimed by the Scribes; the authority of true words, the authority of a noble life; yes, authority which God gives a great moral and religious man. God delegates authority to men just in proportion to their power of truth, and their power of goodness, — to their being and their life. So God spoke in Jesus, as he taught the perfect religion, anticipated, developed, but never yet transcended.

This, then, was the relation of Jesus to his age; the sectarians cursed him, cursed him by their gods, rejected him, abused him, persecuted him, sought his life. Yes, they condemned him in the name of God. All evil, says the proverb, begins in that name; much continues to claim it. The religionists, the sects, the sectarian leaders, rejected him, condemned and slew him at the last, hanging his body on a tree. Poor priests of the people, they hoped thereby to stifle that awful soul! They only stilled the body; that soul spoke with a thousand tongues. So, in the times of old, when the Saturnian day began to dawn, it might be fabled that the old Titanic race, lovers of darkness and haters of the light, essayed to bar the rising morning from the world, and so heaped Pelion upon Ossa, and Olympus on Pelion; but first the day sent up his crimson flush upon the cloud, and then his saffron tinge, and next the sun came peering o'er the loftiest height, magnificently fair, — and down the mountain's slanting ridge poured the intolerable

day; meanwhile those triple hills, laboriously piled, came toppling, tumbling down, with lumbering crush, and underneath their ruin hid the helpless giants' grave. So was it with men who sat in Moses' seat. But this people, that "knew not the law," and were counted therefore accursed, they welcomed Jesus as they never welcomed the Pharisee, the Sadducee, or the Scribe. Ay, hence were their tears. The hierarchical fire burnt not so bright contrasted with the sun. That people had a Simon Peter, a James, and a John, men not free from faults, no doubt, the record shows it, but with hearts in their bosoms, which could be kindled, and then could light other hearts. Better still, there were Marthas and Marys among that people who "knew not the law" and were cursed. They were the mothers of many a church.

The character of Jesus has not changed, his doctrines are still the same; but what a change in his relation to the age, nay to the ages. The stone that the builders rejected is indeed become the head of the corner, and its foundation too. He is worshipped as a God. That is the rank assigned him by all but a fraction of the Christian world. It is no wonder. Good men worship the best thing they know, and call it God. What was taught to the mass of men, in those days, better than the character of Christ? Should they rather worship the Grecian Jove, or the Jehovah of the Jews? To me it seems the moral attainment of Jesus was above the hierarchical conception of God, as taught at Athens, Rome, Jerusalem. Jesus was the prince of peace, the king of truth, praying for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" The Jehovah of the Old Testament was awful and stern, a man of war, hating the wicked. The sacerdotal conception of God at Rome and Athens

was lower yet. No wonder, then, that men soon learned to honor Jesus as a God, and then as God himself. Apostolical and other legends tell of his divine birth, his wondrous power that healed the sick, palsied and crippled, deaf and dumb and blind, created bread, turned water into wine, and bid obedient devils come and go, — a power that raised the dead. They tell that nature felt with him, and at his death the strongly sympathizing sun paused at high noon, and for three hours withheld the day; that rocks were rent, and opening graves gave up their sainted dead, who trod once more the streets of Zion, the first-fruits of them that slept; they tell too how disappointed Death gave back his prey, and spirit-like, Jesus restored, in flesh and shape the same, passed through the doors shut up, and in a bodily form was taken up to heaven before the face of men! Believe men of these things as they will. To me they are not truth and fact, but mythic symbols and poetry, — the psalm of praise with which the world's rude heart extols and magnifies its king. It is for his truth and his life, his wisdom, goodness, piety, that he is honored in my heart; yes, in the world's heart. It is for this that in his name churches are built, and prayers are prayed; for this that the best things we know we honor with his name.

He is the greatest person of the ages; the proudest achievement of the human race. He taught the absolute religion, love to God and man. That God has yet greater men in store I doubt not; to say this is not to detract from the majestic character of Christ, but to affirm the omnipotence of God. When they come, the old contest will be renewed, — the living prophet stoned, the dead one worshipped. Be that as it may, there are duties he teaches us far different from those most commonly

taught. He was the greatest fact in the whole history of man. Had he conformed to what was told him of men, had he counselled only with flesh and blood, he had been nothing but a poor Jew; the world had lost that rich endowment of religious genius, that richest treasure of religious life, the glad tidings of the one religion, absolute and true. What if he had said, as others, "None can be greater than Moses, none so great"? He had been a dwarf; the spirit of God had faded from his soul! But he conferred with God, not men; took counsel of his hopes, not his fears. Working for men, with men, by men, trusting in God, and pure as truth, he was not scared at the little din of Church or State, and trembled not, though Pilate and Herod were made friends only to crucify him that was a born king of the world. Methinks I hear that lofty spirit say to you or me, Poor brother, fear not, nor despair. The goodness actual in me is possible for all. God is near thee now as then to me, — rich as ever in truth, as able to create, as willing to inspire. Daily and nightly he showers down his infinitude of light. Open thine eyes to see, thy heart to live. Lo, God is here.

THOUGHTS ABOUT JESUS.

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.

It is plain that Jesus was a man of large intellectual character. He had an uncommon understanding, was clear in his sight, shrewd in his judgment, extraordinarily subtle in his arguments, coming to the point with the quickness of lightning. What an eye he had for the beauty of nature, — the little things under his feet, the great things all about him; for cities set on a hill, and for the heavens over his head! What an eye for the beauty of the relations of things! He saw a meaning in the salt without savor, with which men were mending the streets, not fit even for the dunghill, — and what a lesson he drew from it! He saw the beauty of relation in the lilies, clad by God in more beauty than kingly Solomon; in the ravens, who gather not into storehouses and barns, and yet the Great Father feeds and shelters them under his own godly wings. He had reason also, which saw intuitively the great universal law of man's nature. And as the result of this three-fold intellect, he had an eloquence which held crowds of men about him till they forgot hunger, thirst, and weariness, even the drawing on of night. He had a power of reasoning which sent away the scholarly Pharisee, who had journeyed all the way from Jerusalem to confute this peasant. His eloquence was quite peculiar. His mind full of great ideas, his heart aflame with noble sentiments, he knew how to put these into the homeliest words, and yet give

them the most lovely and attractive shape. In that common speech, religion was the text, his commentary was the salt without savor, the raven flying over his head, the lilies of the valley, the grass, dried in the sun yesterday, to-day heating the earthen vessel whereon a poor woman clapped her unbaked bread; it was the tower of Siloam, which fell on men not worse than the survivors; it was the temple, the great idol of the nation, of which should be left not one stone upon another; all these were his commentaries. It was no vulgar mind that could weave such things into common speech in a moment, and make the heavens come down and the earth come up, — with marvellous rapidity and instinctive skill seizing and using every implement that might serve as a medium between his heavenly thought and the understandings of common men. When he spoke, some said that it thundered; some said that an angel spoke; and some said it was the eloquence of genius. Studying in the schools makes nothing like it.

Then there is this peculiarity about his intellect: In reading the first three Gospels, you find in him a mind which does not so much generalize by a copious induction from a great many facts; but it sees the law, as a woman sees it, from a very few principles. And so there is less of philosophical talent than of philosophical genius. You are surprised more at the nice quality of this intellect than at its great quantity. On this account he anticipated experience. There is not a single word in the three Gospels which betrays the youth of Jesus. You would all say, Behold a full-grown man long familiar with the ways of men. You would never think he was a young man, scarce thirty years old. But I do not say you find in Jesus at thirty the immense philosophical reason which marks Socrates, Aristotle, and Bacon at

sixty or seventy, in the maturity of their wisdom; nor would I say that you find such monuments of imagination as you meet at every step in Milton, Shakespeare, or Dante; nor that you find such a vast and comprehensive understanding as you meet in the practical managers of States and empires. The thing would not be possible. In the Old Testament you find the writings of some men of distinguished ability, — the author of the Book of Job, of various parts of the Book of Proverbs, of Ecclesiasticus, of Ecclesiastes, of the wisdom of Solomon, of the prophecy of Isaiah. They were men of very large intellect, old, familiar with men, had seen peace and instituted war, knew the ways of the market-house and of kings' courts. In comparison, the words of Jesus, a Nazarene peasant, only thirty years old, are fully up to the highest level of their writings. You never feel that he was inferior to them in intellectual grasp.

Now, the common idea that Jesus received this intellectual power from miraculous inspiration destroys all the individuality of his character; for it makes him God, or else a mere pipe on which God plays. In either case there is nothing human about it, and it is of no use to us.

But his greater greatness came not from the intellect, but from a higher source. It is eminence of conscience, heart, and soul; in one word, it is religious eminence. Here are the proofs of it: He makes religion consist in piety and morality, not in belief in forms, not in outside devotion. He knew it is a very easy thing to be devout after the common fashion, — as easy to make prayers as to fill your hand with dust from the street. Was it a little thing in Jesus to declare that religion consisted in piety and morality? All the world over, the priests made religion to consist in forms, rituals, mutilating the

body and spirit, in attending to artificial ordinances. Jesus summed up all the law and the prophets in love to God and love to man. Men worshipped the Sabbath; he religiously broke it. They thought God loved only the Jew, and above all some Jewish priest, with bells on his garments; but he set up a travelling Samaritan as the religious man. What a gnashing of teeth there was in the Jerusalem Association when he said the Samaritan was a great man! Doubtless it was a story founded on fact, — some good-natured Samaritan, jogging on his donkey from Jerusalem to Jericho, seeing the poor man, and giving him his sympathy and aid. It took a man of great religious genius to say that two thousand years ago; it is a rare thing to comprehend it to-day. See the same thing in his love of the wicked. He went to cure the sick; not to cure the righteous, and save the well. His sympathy was with the oppressed and trodden down, and very practical sympathy it was too. The finest picture of an ideal gentleman which antiquity has left is contained in the Book of Job. But Job's ideal gentleman is very proud, overbearing to men beneath him. "Their fathers," said he, "I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock." The Book of Job is one of the best in the Old Testament, — full of poetry, which is a small thing, and full of piety and morality, which is a great thing. This is the limitation of that ideal gentleman. Now Jesus goes out to that despised class of men, and says he came to seek and save them. Was that a small thing? Even to-day, in democratic Boston, to be a minister to the poor is a reproach. He is esteemed the most fortunate minister who is ministered unto, and not who ministers. The man who in Boston gathers crowds of men from the common walks of life, — what is he called? "A preacher to the rabble," —

that is the ecclesiastical title. What was it in the old civilization two thousand years ago, — a civilization controlled by priests and soldiers, who had a sword to offer to the beggar and the slave, and who looked with haughty scorn, like Aristotle and Cicero, on men who got their bread by the work of their hand?

The third thing was his trust in God. The Hebrews were and are more remarkable for their faith in God than any other nation that ever lived. In this, Jesus was a Hebrew of Hebrews, the most eminent of his tribe in this vast quality. But witness that his faith was in a God who loved all men, in the God who went out to meet the prodigal, and met him a great way off, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and was more joyous over one sinner that repented than over ninety-nine that needed no repentance. The first Gospel does not understand this, and therefore denies the width of Jesus' faith in God, and makes him limit his ministry to his own nation; but the second and third Gospels put it beyond a doubt.

Now the impression that he has made on the world, the character of his influence, the opinion which the human race has formed of him, — all confirm this judgment, derived from the historical record of his words and works. It seems to me that his actual character was higher than the character assigned to Jehovah in the Old Testament, to Zeus in Greece, or Jupiter in Rome. He made a revolution in the idea of God, and himself went up and took the throne of the world. That was a step in progress; and if called upon to worship the Jehovah of the Old Testament, or Jesus of Nazareth, a plain man, as he is painted in the first three Gospels, I should not hesitate, I should worship my brother; for in the highest qualities this actual man is superior to

men's conception of God. He loves men of all nations; is not angry with the wicked every day; hating sin, he has the most womanly charity for the sinner. Jesus turned the heathen gods out of the heathen heaven, because he was more God than they; and he ascended the throne of Jehovah, because in his life he gave more proofs of justice and love than Jehovah, as he is represented in the Old Testament. Let us not be harsh; let us not blame men for worshipping the creature more than the Creator. They saw the Son higher than the Father, and they did right. The popular adoration of Jesus to-day is to me the best thing in the popular ecclesiastical religion.

But I do not believe in the perfection of Jesus, — that he had no faults of character, was never mistaken, never angry, never out of humor, never dejected, never despairing. I do not believe that from his cradle to his cross he never did, nor said, nor felt, nor thought, a wrong thing. To say that was his character, I think would be as absurd as to say that he learned to walk without stumbling, or to talk without stammering, or could see as well at three hours old as at twelve years, and could reason as well at thirty days as at thirty years. God does not create monsters, he creates men. I cannot say that in his popular teachings there are no errors. It seems to me very plain that he taught the existence of a devil; that he ascribed evil qualities to God, wrath that would not sleep at the Day of Judgment; that he believed in eternal torment. His prediction that the world would soon be destroyed, and that the Son of Man would come back in the clouds of heaven, and that this should take place during the life of men then living, was obviously a mistake. So with the promise of temporal power to the twelve apostles. All this shows the

limitations of the man. Men claim that Jesus had no error in his creed or his life, no defect in his character. Then of course he is not a man, but God himself, or a bare pipe on which God plays; and in either case there was no virtue, no warning, no example in the man. And I think that Jesus would be the last man in the world ever to have claimed the exemption that is claimed for him by the clergy in all Christian lands. I know that what I say is a great heresy.

The coming of such a man was of the greatest importance to mankind. He showed a higher type of manliness than the world had ever seen before, or men deemed possible. There was manly intellect joined with womanly conscience and affection and soul; there was manhood and womanhood united into one great humanhood of character. Men were shut up in nationalities; he looked at humanity, — all men were as brothers. Men looked out at some old conception of a God who once spoke on Sinai, and who said his last word years ago. He told them there was a living God, numbering the hairs of their head, loving the eighteen men whom the tower of Siloam slew, and just as ready to inspire the humblest fisherman by the Galilean lake as Moses. He found men undertaking to serve God by artificial rites and ceremonies, sacrifices, fast days, feast days; and he bade them serve Him by daily piety and morality; and, if they could not find the way, he walked before and showed them, — and this was the greatest thing that could be done.

I think that Jesus of Nazareth was greater than the Evangelists supposed him to be. They valued him for his miraculous birth and works, — because he was the Hebrew Messiah. I do not believe his miraculous birth and works; I am sure he was not the Hebrew Messiah.

I should not think him any better for being miraculously born; the common birth is good enough for mankind. I think the Christian churches greatly underrate Jesus. They make his death his great merit. To be willing to spend a few hours in dying for mankind, — what is that? We must all meet death, — if not to-day, some other day; and to spend a few hours in dying is a trifle any day; for a few dollars a month, and a bit of bunting with stripes on it, you may hire men any day for that. But to be a man with such a character as that, possessed of such a masculine quantity of intellect, and of such a womanly quality, with such a feminine affection and soul, — I would rather be that than be a dozen Hebrew Messiahs wrought into one. To teach men that religion was piety and morality, and what belonged to them; to tell them that religion was not for Saturday only, but for Sunday, Monday, and every day; for the fireside and the wayside; to live that religion, merciful to the merciless, hating sin with all his character, but loving the sinner with all his heart; able as the ablest-minded, but shedding his sunlight on the dark places of the earth, — I would rather be such a man than a hundred incarnations of the Olympian Jove. Men vastly underrate the character of Jesus in looking to make him a God. They have forgotten the mighty manhood which burned in that Galilean breast.

This was the cause of his success, — he was a great man, and of the highest kind of greatness; not without faults, but the manliest of men; not without errors in his doctrine, as it has been reported. He called men off from a dead Deity to a living God, from artificial sacraments to natural piety and morality. He preached natural religion, gave men a new sight of humanity. It was too great for them. The first generation said he was a devil, and slew him; the next said he was a God, and

worshipped him. He was not a God, but a man showing us the way to God; not saving us by his death, but leading us by his life; crucified between two *other* malefactors, as the Scripture tells, buried secretly at night, and now worshipped as God.

Though almost two thousand years have passed by, Christendom has not yet got high enough to reverence the Galilean peasant who was our brother. We honor his death, but not his life; look to him to save us *in* our sins, not to save us *from* them. Men call him "Master," and scorn his lesson; "Lord," and reject the religion which he taught, — to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep a life unspotted from the world.

I look on Jesus as the highest product of the human race. I honor intellectual greatness; I bend my neck to Socrates, and Newton, and Laplace, and Hegel, and Kant, and the vast minds of our own day. But what are they all, compared with this greatness of justice, greatness of philanthropy, greatness of religion? Why, they are as nothing! I look on Jesus not only as a historical prophet, but as a prophetic foretelling. He shows what is in you and me, and only comes as the earliest flower of the spring comes, to tell us that summer is near at hand. Amid the Cæsars, the Maximuses, the Herculeses, the Vishnus, the Buddhas, and the Jehovahs, who have been successively the objects of the earthly or heavenly worship of men, Jesus comes out as these fair flowers come in the wintry hour, tokens of a summer yet to come of tropic realms, where all this beauty blossoms all the year. I thank God for the history which Jesus is! I thank him more for the prophecy which he is!

THE MISSION OF JESUS.

WHAT did Jesus come for? To seek and to save that which was lost, not to destroy it; and to lose his own life, not to save it. His great ability of intellect separated him from the sympathy of his age. The controlling men could no more understand him than an oyster could follow an eagle in his flight through the sky. His motives were beyond their comprehension. Men commonly sought the society of the rich and great; he that of the poor and lowly. They associated with the famous and respectable; he was the friend of publicans and sinners. There were able men enough about Jerusalem, seeking for ease, honor, respectability, and money. I find no fault with them for that; they sought the best things they were acquainted with. He sought to serve and bless mankind. He asked his daily bread, no more,—no service, honor, fame,—and would not be called master, though he was the master of them all; he would not be called good, even. See what kind of persons he held up as models to mankind: the despised Samaritan, who went out of his way to do good to a national enemy, whom his nation hated,—and did it after the man's own countrymen had passed by, and left him half dead; the poor and hated publican, who dared not lift up his eyes to God, abashed with consciousness of sin in the sweet presence of the Father; the poor widow, who stealthily dropped her two mites, saved by penurious self-denial, into the temple chest. These were the models he held up for the adoration of mankind, while Herod and Pilate passed by in pomp and got the admiration of the people, and the high-priest stood there, arrayed in his costly robes, and was greeted with the applause of the multitude. See how he lived in daily contact with want and

ignorance and lowness and sin; but he saw want to relieve it, ignorance to teach, lowness to raise it up, sin to awaken the soul in the sinner's bosom, and to elevate it to God. He went amongst men who seemed to think that God died in giving birth to the Old Testament, as men now think he died in giving birth to Christ and the New Testament. He told them of God, not a thousand years off; showed them his providence, not in killing Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and taking the Hebrews through, high and dry; he appealed to facts, not fiction; he showed God's providence in the grass, blooming to-day, though feeding the oven to-morrow; in the lilies of the valley, taking no thought, but clad in more beauty than Solomon, in the fowls of the air, the raven seeking his food afar, the sparrows, three of them sold for a penny, yet not one of them falling to the ground without the Father. They wanted faith; and he not only had it, he showed it, he lived it, he was faith manifest in the flesh.

Do you wonder such a man made enemies of the priests, the Scribes, and the Pharisees? It was not possible it should be otherwise. His greatness put their littleness to shame, his charity was their condemnation. Those awful words, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees!" were not half so condemnatory as the parable of the Samaritan and the story of the Prodigal Son. They could understand his criticism,—it scorched and withered them up,—but his creation was keener still, though they comprehended it not. Men bred under a different ideal of religion could not see him as he was, more than a fly can see the State House. No wonder they hated and slew him.

Do you wonder that he was loved? He went out to seek the lost,—the poor, who had none to comfort; the

sick, who had nobody to heal them, except that great physician; the despised children of Abraham, who remembered the priests' and Levites' hate, and paid for it with scorn and indignity and contempt. Do you wonder the people heard him gladly? I can understand how such a man looked on the sons and daughters of Abraham,— poor, condemned, and self-condemned; I can understand how he went and poured out his great human heart and his great human soul to them, in words that ran round like a river of fire, and they turned and blessed the man who spoke a human word to their hungry human soul. Very likely there were men amongst them who had given up all hope of religion, who had no joy in the remembrance of the past, and no hope in the future, — men who despaired of man, and had no faith in God. There are always such men. They are not bad, only sick men, and desperate. The churches cast out such men as infidels; they ought to take them to their arms, and cheer, and comfort, and heal, and bless them. That is always a partial church which has not a corner in the chancel for such as call themselves infidels. I can understand how Christ spoke to such men; how he solved their doubts, healed their wounds, and cured their griefs; not by a special answer to every special question, — I do not believe even his wisdom could have given a satisfactory answer to every particular and troublesome doubt, — but by awaking a natural religious sentiment in the heart. I can understand how such men left everything and followed him; how on foot, and sore, tired, and hungry, they forgot their fainting and the famine in their mouth, for the great plenteousness which so filled their soul. It is always a great day when a man of genius is born, a man of merely intellectual genius; it is a very great day when a man is born into the

world with a genius for justice, for love, and for piety. If he can speak only to scholars, in a scholar's speech, it is a great thing, and the human race may well hold its Christmas festivals at such a birth. But when a man comes armed with such a genius that he, with his single soul, can fill up all the space between highest God and humblest man, so that he can hear with his own ears, and at first hand, the thoughts of God, and with his own mouth, and at first hand, tell them to the people, — needing no mediator between him and God, on the one side, and between him and man, on the other side, — then you have a very rare soul, and mankind may well celebrate its Easter for that. And Jesus was such a one. He had the power of receiving truth from God, and the power of telling it, in a way and with an eloquence which was thunder and lightning to the people, such as the world had not seen before. It would be rather wonderful to see a man come now to seek and save the lost; it would imply something more than great intellect, — an unconscious gift of conscience, affection, and the religious power. What was it to do this two thousand years ago? Now we have Jesus for our model, and a hundred sects in all Christian lands, fired by his example; some believers in his theology, some disbelievers, from St. Augustine down to Robert Owen; some believers in the theology of the times, some disbelievers, the believers in real goodness towards men.

I have always looked on Jesus as the greatest pattern of a man that the human race has produced; but in nothing does his greatness appear so high as in the direction in which he goes to work. He turns to the needy, and seeks for the lost. Here was the greatest man God had raised up, engaged in the greatest and

highest function a man can fill. Suppose such a man should come now, — as much before the popular religion in our time as he was then before the popular religion in Jerusalem, — how would he be received? Some think if such a man were to come, he would report himself at the Boston Association of Ministers, and be invited to stand in pulpits, and perhaps to deliver a "Thursday Lecture." I doubt that he would do any such thing. If so, I think he would shake the pulpits worse than last week's storm shook the steeples. I have some doubts whether the ministers of the nineteenth century would come off any better than the ministers of the first century did. I think he would turn his attention to the lost now as he did then; he would not have far to go to seek and find them. Here are the materially lost, — fugitive slaves who do not own their own bodies, and are hunted by men who are members of churches; who take the sacrament in the church, in the name of Christ, on Sunday, and the next day kidnap their brother men. He would care for these outcasts. He would raise the drunkard, the criminal, the poor, — men who never enter a church from year to year, and in a great city die and have no consolation; who know of no redeemer, human or divine. How many thousand men and women there are who hear no word of religious instruction, religious rebuke, or religious comfort, who have only one act of religion, as it is commonly called, performed in their presence, and that is the burial service read over their coffin-lids. I think Christ would have a word to say to and for all these men. I think there would be such a Sermon on the Mount as would make the ears of mankind tingle. Then there are men spiritually lost, and I think he would say a word to them. Thunder it might be, terrible at first, but like thunder, as cleansing

to the sky; not so like lightning — which shatters where it shines — as light, which cheers and revives what it falls upon. I think he would tell them of the falseness of their life, of the unsatisfactoriness of joys in which religion had no part; that Christian hypocrisy is a poor substitute for Christian religion before men, and poorer before God. I think he would show them that religion is natural, is human nature itself at its work; that he would prove to them their need of it, and show them the means of supply.

Well, Jesus, when he did come, came to seek and to save the lost. He had to pay for it with his life. Had he come to lose men, and not to find them, he might have had rank and fame, have been in the senate of King Herod, with plenty of money and honor. But now see the odds. Men could not understand him then; but his idea went into a few minds, his example into more, and ten years had not passed by before there were men going all over the world, seeking for what was lost; and before a hundred years, in every great city of the heathen world there were Christians, whom his idea had inspired, and his example had quickened into life. Now what a different world it is because he has done as he did! Take that name out of the world, that great character out of the world, and all its influence, and what should we be? I speak within bounds when I say he has advanced the civilization of the world at least a thousand years. Yet we understand very little of his religion; we have talked so much of his divinity that we have forgotten his humanity.

To-day is Easter Sunday, and all over the Christian world, save puritanical New England, it is a day of rejoicing. It is to the Catholic Christian the great festival of the Christian year. Men celebrate the resurrection

of Jesus. To me all that is mythology; yet I welcome the day which brings men to a consciousness of that great soul, and wish men could see what he came for, and how he did his work. This seeking to save the lost is the special thing which makes him so dear to mankind. If he had lived such a life as Herod did, do you suppose men would ever have told the story of his resurrection from the dead, and celebrated Easter Festival over that event? No, they would have hated him the more if he had been raised from the dead. It was his character that made men believe he wrought miracles. It is this which makes his memory so precious to the world.

A DISCOURSE OF THE TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT IN CHRISTIANITY.

Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.—Luke xxi. 33.

In this sentence we have a very clear indication that Jesus of Nazareth believed the religion he taught would be eternal, that the substance of it would last forever. Yet there are some who are affrighted by the faintest rustle which a heretic makes among the dry leaves of theology; they tremble lest Christianity itself should perish without hope. Ever and anon the cry is raised, "The Philistines be upon us, and Christianity is in danger." The least doubt respecting the popular theology, or the existing machinery of the church; the least sign of distrust in the religion of the pulpit, or the religion of the street, is by some good men supposed to be at enmity with faith in Christ, and capable of shaking Christianity itself. On the other hand, a few bad men, and a few pious men, it is said, on both sides of the water, tell us the day of Christianity is past. The latter, it is alleged, would persuade us that hereafter piety must take a new form; the teachings of Jesus are to be passed by; that religion is to wing her way sublime, above the flight of Christianity, far away, toward heaven, as the fledged eaglet leaves forever the nest which sheltered his callow youth. Let us therefore devote a few moments to this subject, and consider what is *transient* in Christianity, and what is *permanent* therein. The

topic seems not inappropriate to the times in which we live, or the occasion that calls us together.

Christ says his word shall never pass away. Yet, at first sight, nothing seems more fleeting than a word. It is an evanescent impulse of the most fickle element. It leaves no track where it went through the air. Yet to this, and this only, did Jesus intrust the truth wherewith he came laden to the earth, — truth for the salvation of the world. He took no pains to perpetuate his thoughts; they were poured forth where occasion found him an audience, — by the side of the lake, or a well; in a cottage, or the temple; in a fisher's boat, or the synagogue of the Jews. He founds no institution as a monument of his words. He appoints no order of men to preserve his bright and glad relations. He only bids his friends give freely the truth they had freely received. He did not even write his words in a book. With a noble confidence, the result of his abiding faith, he scattered them broadcast on the world, leaving the seed to its own vitality. He knew that what is of God cannot fail, for God keeps his own. He sowed his seed in the heart, and left it there, to be watered and warmed by the dew and the sun which heaven sends. He felt his words were for eternity. So he trusted them to the uncertain air; and for eighteen hundred years that faithful element has held them good, — distinct as when first warm from his lips. Now they are translated into every human speech, and murmured in all earth's thousand tongues, from the pine forests of the North to the palm groves of eastern Ind. They mingle, as it were, with the roar of a populous city, and join the chime of the desert sea. Of a Sabbath morn they are repeated from church to church, from isle to isle, and land to land, till their music goes round the world. These words have become the breath of the

good, the hope of the wise, the joy of the pious, and that for many millions of hearts. They are the prayers of our churches; our better devotion by fireside and field-side; the enchantment of our hearts. It is these words that still work wonders, to which the first recorded miracles were nothing in grandeur and utility. It is these which build our temples and beautify our homes. They raise our thoughts of sublimity; they purify our ideal of purity; they hallow our prayer for truth and love. They make beauteous and divine the life which plain men lead. They give wings to our aspirations. What charmers they are! Sorrow is lulled at their bidding. They take the sting out of disease, and rob adversity of his power to disappoint. They give health and wings to the pious soul, broken-hearted and ship-wrecked in his voyage through life, and encourage him to tempt the perilous way once more. They make all things ours; Christ our brother; time our servant; death our ally, and the witness of our triumph. They reveal to us the presence of God, which else we might not have seen so clearly in the first wind-flower of spring, in the falling of a sparrow, in the distress of a nation, in the sorrow or the rapture of the world. Silence the voice of Christianity, and the world is well-nigh dumb; for gone is that sweet music which kept in awe the rulers and the people, which cheers the poor widow in her lonely toil, and comes, like light through the windows of morning, to men who sit stooping and feeble, with failing eyes and a hungering heart. It is gone — all gone! only the cold, bleak world left before them.

Such is the life of these words; such the empire they have won for themselves over men's minds since they were spoken first. In the mean time, the words of great men and mighty, whose name shook whole continents,

though graven in metal and stone, though stamped in institutions, and defended by whole tribes of priests and troops of followers, — their words have gone to the ground, and the world gives back no echo of their voice. Meanwhile the great works, also, of old times, castle and tower, and town, their cities and their empires, have perished, and left scarce a mark on the bosom of the earth to show they once have been. The philosophy of the wise, the art of the accomplished, the song of the poet, the ritual of the priest, though honored as divine in their day, have gone down a prey to oblivion. Silence has closed over them; only their spectres now haunt the earth. A deluge of blood has swept over the nations; a night of darkness, more deep than the fabled darkness of Egypt, has lowered down upon that flood, to destroy or to hide what the deluge had spared. But through all this the words of Christianity have come down to us from the lips of that Hebrew youth, gentle and beautiful as the light of a star, not spent by their journey through time and through space. They have built up a new civilization, which the wisest Gentile never hoped for, which the most pious Hebrew never foretold. Through centuries of wasting these words have flown on, like a dove in the storm, and now wait to descend on hearts pure and earnest, as the Father's spirit, we are told, came down on his lowly Son. The old heavens and the old earth are indeed passed away, but the Word stands. Nothing shows clearer than this how fleeting is what man calls great, how lasting what God pronounces true.

Looking at the word of Jesus, at real Christianity, the pure religion he taught, nothing appears more fixed and certain. Its influence widens as light extends; it deepens as the nations grow more wise. But, looking at the history of what men call Christianity, nothing seems

more uncertain and perishable. While true religion is always the same thing, in each century and every land, in each man that feels it, the Christianity of the pulpit, which is the religion taught, the Christianity of the people, which is the religion that is accepted and lived out, has never been the same thing in any two centuries or lands, except only in name. The difference between what is called Christianity by the Unitarians in our times, and that of some ages past, is greater than the difference between Mahomet and the Messiah. The difference at this day between opposing classes of Christians, the difference between the Christianity of some sects and that of Christ himself, is deeper and more vital than that between Jesus and Plato, pagan as we call him. The Christianity of the seventh century has passed away. We recognize only the ghost of superstition in its faded features, as it comes up at our call. It is one of the things which have been, and can be no more; for neither God nor the world goes back. Its terrors do not frighten, nor its hopes allure us. We rejoice that it has gone. But how do we know that our Christianity shall not share the same fate? Is there that difference between the nineteenth century and some seventeen that have gone before it since Jesus, to warrant the belief that our notion of Christianity shall last for ever? The stream of time has already beat down philosophies and theologies, temple and church, though never so old and revered. How do we know there is not a perishing element in what we call Christianity? Jesus tell us *his* word is the word of God, and so shall never pass away. But who tells us that *our* word shall never pass away? that *our notion* of his word shall stand for ever?

Let us look at this matter a little more closely. In actual Christianity, — that is, in that portion of Chris-

tianity which is preached and believed, — there seems to have been, ever since the time of its earthly founder, two elements, the one transient, the other permanent. The one is the thought, the folly, the uncertain wisdom, the theological notions, the impiety of man; the other, the eternal truth of God. These two bear, perhaps, the same relation to each other that the phenomena of outward nature, such as sunshine and cloud, growth, decay, and reproduction, bear to the great law of nature, which underlies and supports them all. As in that case more attention is commonly paid to the particular phenomena than to the general law, so in this case more is generally given to the transient in Christianity than to the permanent therein.

It must be confessed, though with sorrow, that transient things form a great part of what is commonly taught as religion. An undue place has often been assigned to forms and doctrines, while too little stress has been laid on the divine life of the soul, love to God, and love to man. Religious forms may be useful and beautiful. They are so, whenever they speak to the soul, and answer a want thereof. In our present state some forms are perhaps necessary. But they are only the accident of Christianity, not its substance. They are the robe, not the angel, who may take another robe quite as becoming and useful. One sect has many forms; another, none. Yet both may be equally Christian, in spite of the redundance or the deficiency. They are a part of the language in which religion speaks, and exist, with few exceptions, wherever man is found. In our calculating nation, in our rationalizing sect, we have retained but two of the rites so numerous in the early Christian Church, and even these we have attenuated to the last degree, leaving them little more than a spectre

of the ancient form. Another age may continue or forsake both; may revive old forms, or invent new ones to suit the altered circumstances of the times, and yet be Christians quite as good as we, or our fathers of the dark ages. Whether the apostles designed these rites to be perpetual seems a question which belongs to scholars and antiquarians, — not to us, as Christian men and women. So long as they satisfy or help the pious heart, so long they are good. Looking behind or around us, we see that the forms and rites of the Christians are quite as fluctuating as those of the heathens; from whom some of them have been, not unwisely, adopted by the earlier church.

Again, the doctrines that have been connected with Christianity, and taught in its name, are quite as changeable as the form. This also takes place unavoidably. If observations be made upon nature, — which must take place so long as man has senses and understanding, — there will be a philosophy of nature, and philosophical doctrines. These will differ, as the observations are just or inaccurate, and as the deductions from observed facts are true or false. Hence there will be different schools of natural philosophy, so long as men have eyes and understandings of different clearness and strength. And if men observe and reflect upon religion, — which will be done so long as man is a religious and reflective being, — there must also be a philosophy of religion, a theology, and theological doctrines. These will differ, as men have felt much or little of religion, as they analyze their sentiments correctly or otherwise, and as they have reasoned right or wrong. Now, the true system of nature, which exists in the outward facts, whether discovered or not, is always the same thing, though the philosophy of nature, which men invent, change every month, and be

one thing at London and the opposite at Berlin. Thus there is but one system of nature as it exists in fact, though many theories of nature, which exist in our imperfect notions of that system, and by which we may approximate and at length reach it. Now, there can be but one religion which is absolutely true, existing in the facts of human nature and the ideas of infinite God. That, whether acknowledged or not, is always the same thing, and never changes. So far as a man has any real religion, — either the principle or the sentiment thereof, — so far he has that, by whatever name he may call it. For, strictly speaking, there is but one kind of religion, as there is but one kind of love, though the manifestations of this religion, in forms, doctrines, and life, be never so diverse. It is through these, men approximate to the true expression of this religion. Now while this religion is one and always the same thing, there may be numerous systems of theology or philosophies of religion. These, with their creeds, confessions, and collections of doctrines, deduced by reasoning upon the facts observed, may be baseless and false, either because the observation was too narrow in extent, or otherwise defective in point of accuracy, or because the reasoning was illogical, and therefore the deduction spurious. Each of these three faults is conspicuous in the systems of theology. Now, the solar system as it exists in fact is permanent, though the notions of Thales and Ptolemy, of Copernicus and Descartes, about this system, prove transient, imperfect approximations to the true expression. So the Christianity of Jesus is permanent, though what passes for Christianity with popes and catechisms, with sects and churches, in the first century or in the nineteenth century prove transient also. Now, it has sometimes happened that a man took his philosophy of

nature at second-hand, and then attempted to make his observations conform to his theory, and nature ride in his panniers. Thus some philosophers refused to look at the moon through Galileo's telescope; for, according to their theory of vision, such an instrument would not aid the sight. Thus their preconceived notions stood up between them and nature. Now, it has often happened that men took their theology thus at second-hand, and distorted the history of the world and man's nature besides, to make religion conform to their notions. Their theology stood between them and God. Those obstinate philosophers have disciples in no small number.

What another has said of false systems of science will apply equally to the popular theology: "It is barren in effects, fruitful in questions, slow and languid in its improvement, exhibiting in its generality the counterfeit of perfection, but ill filled up in its details, popular in its choice, but suspected by its very promoters, and therefore bolstered up and countenanced with artifices. Even those who have been determined to try for themselves, to add their support to learning, and to enlarge its limits, have not dared entirely to desert received opinions, nor to seek the spring-head of things. But they think they have done a great thing if they intersperse and contribute something of their own; prudently considering, that by their assent they can save their modesty, and by their contributions, their liberty. Neither is there, nor ever will be, an end or limit to these things. One snatches at one thing, another is pleased with another; there is no dry nor clear sight of anything. Every one plays the philosopher out of the small treasures of his own fancy; the more sublime wits more acutely and with better success, the duller with less success, but equal obstinacy; and, by the discipline of some learned men, sciences are

bounded within the limits of some certain authors which they have set down, imposing them upon old men and instilling them into young. So that now (as Tully cavilled upon Cæsar's consulship) the star Lyra riseth by an edict, and authority is taken for truth, and not truth for authority; which kind of order and discipline is very convenient for our present use, but banisheth those which are better."

Any one who traces the history of what is called Christianity, will see that nothing changes more from age to age than the doctrines taught as Christian, and insisted on as essential to Christianity and personal salvation. What is falsehood in one province passes for truth in another. The heresy of one age is the orthodox belief and "only infallible rule" of the next. Now Arius, and now Athanasius, is lord of the ascendant. Both were excommunicated in their turn, each for affirming what the other denied. Men are burned for professing what men are burned for denying. For centuries the doctrines of the Christians were no better, to say the least, than those of their contemporary pagans. The theological doctrines derived from our fathers seem to have come from Judaism, Heathenism, and the caprice of philosophers, far more than they have come from the principle and sentiment of Christianity. The doctrine of the Trinity, the very Achilles of theological dogmas, belongs to philosophy and not religion; its subtleties cannot even be expressed in our tongue. As old religions became superannuated, and died out, they left to the rising faith, as to a residuary legatee, their forms and their doctrines; or rather, as the giant in the fable left his poisoned garment to work the overthrow of his conqueror. Many tenets that pass current in our theology seem to be the refuse of idol temples, the off-scourings

of Jewish and heathen cities, rather than the sands of virgin gold which the stream of Christianity has worn off from the rock of ages, and brought in its bosom for us. It is wood, hay, and stubble, wherewith men have built on the corner-stone Christ laid. What wonder the fabric is in peril when tried by fire? The stream of Christianity, as men receive it, has caught a stain from every soil it has filtered through, so that now it is not the pure water from the well of life which is offered to our lips, but streams troubled and polluted by man with mire and dirt. If Paul and Jesus could read our books of theological doctrines, would they accept as their teaching what men have vented in their name? Never, till the letters of Paul had faded out of his memory; never, till the words of Jesus had been torn out from the book of life. It is their notions about Christianity men have taught as the only living word of God. They have piled their own rubbish against the temple of Truth where Piety comes up to worship; what wonder the pile seems unshapely and like to fall? But these theological doctrines are fleeting as the leaves on the trees. They —

> "Are found
> Now green in youth, now withered on the ground:
> Another race the following spring supplies;
> They fall successive, and successive rise."

Like the clouds of the sky, they are here to-day; to-morrow, all swept off and vanished; while Christianity itself, like the heaven above, with its sun, and moon, and uncounted stars, is always over our head, though the cloud sometimes debars us of the needed light. It must of necessity be the case that our reasonings, and therefore our theological doctrines, are imperfect, and so perishing. It is only gradually that we approach to the

true system of nature by observation and reasoning, and work out our philosophy and theology by the toil of the brain. But meantime, if we are faithful, the great truths of morality and religion, the deep sentiment of love to man and love to God, are perceived intuitively, and by instinct, as it were, though our theology be imperfect and miserable. The theological notions of Abraham, to take the story as it stands, were exceedingly gross, yet a greater than Abraham has told us, "Abraham desired to see my day, saw it, and was glad." Since these notions are so fleeting, why need we accept the commandment of men as the doctrine of God?

This transitoriness of doctrines appears in many instances, of which two may be selected for a more attentive consideration. First, the doctrine respecting the origin and authority of the Old and New Testament. There has been a time when men were burned for asserting doctrines of natural philosophy which rested on evidence the most incontestable, because those doctrines conflicted with sentences in the Old Testament. Every word of that Jewish record was regarded as miraculously inspired, and therefore as infallibly true. It was believed that the Christian religion itself rested thereon, and must stand or fall with the immaculate Hebrew text. He was deemed no small sinner who found mistakes in the manuscripts. On the authority of the written word man was taught to believe impossible legends, conflicting assertions; to take fiction for fact, a dream for a miraculous revelation of God, an Oriental poem for a grave history of miraculous events, a collection of amatory idyls for a serious discourse "touching the mutual love of Christ and the Church;" they have been taught to accept a picture sketched by some glowing Eastern imagination, never intended to be taken for a reality, as a

proof that the infinite God spoke in human words, appeared in the shape of a cloud, a flaming bush, or a man who ate, and drank, and vanished into smoke; that he gave counsels to-day, and the opposite to-morrow; that he violated his own laws, was angry, and was only dissuaded by a mortal man from destroying at once a whole nation, — millions of men who rebelled against their leader in a moment of anguish. Questions in philosophy, questions in the Christian religion, have been settled by an appeal to that book. The inspiration of its authors has been assumed as infallible. Every fact in the early Jewish history has been taken as a type of some analogous fact in Christian history. The most distant events, even such as are still in the arms of time, were supposed to be clearly foreseen and foretold by pious Hebrews several centuries before Christ. It has been assumed at the outset, with no shadow of evidence, that those writers held a miraculous communication with God, such as he has granted to no other man. What was originally a presumption of bigoted Jews became an article of faith, which Christians were burned for not believing. This has been for centuries the general opinion of the Christian church, both Catholic and Protestant, though the former never accepted the Bible as the *only* source of religious truth. It has been so. Still worse, it is now the general opinion of religious sects at this day. Hence the attempt, which always fails, to reconcile the philosophy of our times with the poems in Genesis writ a thousand years before Christ. Hence the attempt to conceal the contradictions in the record itself. Matters have come to such a pass that even now he is deemed an infidel, if not by implication an atheist, whose reverence for the Most High forbids him to believe that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, — a thought at

which the flesh creeps with horror; to believe it solely on the authority of an Oriental story, written down nobody knows when or by whom, or for what purpose; which may be a poem, but cannot be the record of a fact, unless God is the author of confusion and a lie.

Now, this idolatry of the Old Testament has not always existed. Jesus says that none born of a woman is greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John. Paul tells us the law — the very crown of the old Hebrew revelation — is a shadow of good things which have now come; only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; and when faith has come, that we are no longer under the schoolmaster; that it was a law of sin and death, from which we are made free by the law of the spirit of life. Christian teachers themselves have differed so widely in their notion of the doctrines and meaning of those books that it makes one weep to think of the follies deduced therefrom. But modern criticism is fast breaking to pieces this idol which men have made out of the Scriptures. It has shown that here are the most different works thrown together; that their authors, wise as they sometimes were, pious as we feel often their spirit to have been, had only that inspiration which is common to other men equally pious and wise; that they were by no means infallible, but were mistaken in facts or in reasoning, — uttered predictions which time has not fulfilled; men who in some measure partook of the darkness and limited notions of their age, and were not always above its mistakes or its corruptions.

The history of opinions on the New Testament is quite similar. It has been assumed at the outset, it would seem with no sufficient reason, without the smallest pretence on its writers' part, that all of its authors were

infallibly and miraculously inspired, so that they could commit no error of doctrine or fact. Men have been bid to close their eyes at the obvious difference between Luke and John, the serious disagreement between Paul and Peter; to believe, on the smallest evidence, accounts which shock the moral sense and revolt the reason, and tend to place Jesus in the same series with Hercules, and Apollonius of Tyana; accounts which Paul in the Epistles never mentions, though he also had a vein of the miraculous running quite through him. Men have been told that all these things must be taken as part of Christianity, and if they accepted the religion, they must take all these accessories along with it; that the living spirit could not be had without the killing letter. All the books which caprice or accident had brought together between the lids of the Bible were declared to be the infallible word of God, the only certain rule of religious faith and practice. Thus the Bible was made not a single channel, but the *only* certain rule of religious faith and practice. To disbelieve any of its statements, or even the common interpretation put upon those statements by the particular age or church in which the man belonged, was held to be infidelity, if not atheism. In the name of him who forbid us to judge our brother, good men and pious men have applied these terms to others, good and pious as themselves. That state of things has by no means passed away. Men who cry down the absurdities of paganism in the worst spirit of the French "free thinkers," call others infidels and atheist, who point out, though reverently, other absurdities which men have piled upon Christianity. So the world goes. An idolatrous regard for the imperfect scripture of God's word is the apple of Atalanta, which defeats theologians running for the hand of divine truth.

But the current notions respecting the infallible inspiration of the Bible have no foundation in the Bible itself. Which evangelist, which apostle of the New Testament, what prophet or psalmist of the Old Testament, ever claims infallible authority for himself or for others? Which of them does not in his own writings show that he was finite, and, with all his zeal and piety, possessed but a limited inspiration, the bound whereof we can sometimes discover? Did Christ ever demand that men should assent to the doctrines of the Old Testament, credit its stories, and take its poems for histories, and believe equally two accounts that contradict one another? Has he ever told you that all the truths of his religion, all the beauty of a Christian life, should be contained in the writings of those men who, even after his resurrection, expected him to be a Jewish king; of men who were sometimes at variance with one another, and misunderstood his divine teachings? Would not those modest writers themselves be confounded at the idolatry we pay them? Opinions may change on these points, as they have often changed — changed greatly and for the worse since the days of Paul. They are changing now, and we may hope for the better; for God makes man's folly as well as his wrath to praise him, and continually brings good out of evil.

Another instance of the transitoriness of doctrines taught as Christian is found in those which relate to the nature and authority of Christ. One ancient party has told us that he is the infinite God; another, that he is both God and man; a third, that he was a man, the son of Joseph and Mary, born as we are; tempted like ourselves; inspired as we may be if we will pay the price. Each of the former parties believed its doctrine on this

head was infallibly true, and formed the very substance of Christianity, and was one of the essential conditions of salvation, though scarce any two distinguished teachers, of ancient or modern times, agree in their expression of this truth.

Almost every sect that has ever been makes Christianity rest on the personal authority of Jesus, and not the immutable truth of the doctrines themselves, or the authority of God, who sent him into the world. Yet it seems difficult to conceive any reason why moral and religious truths should rest for their support on the personal authority of their revealer, any more than the truths of science on that of him who makes them known first or most clearly. It is hard to see why the great truths of Christianity rest on the personal authority of Jesus, more than the axioms of geometry rest on the personal authority of Euclid or Archimedes. The authority of Jesus, as of all teachers, one would naturally think, must rest on the truth of his words, and not their truth on his authority.

Opinions respecting the nature of Christ seem to be constantly changing. In the three first centuries after Christ, it appears, great latitude of speculation prevailed. Some said he was God, with nothing of human nature, his body only an illusion; others, that he was man, with nothing of the divine nature, his miraculous birth having no foundation in fact. In a few centuries it was decreed by councils that he was God, thus honoring the divine element; next, that he was man also, thus admitting the human side. For some ages the Catholic Church seems to have dwelt chiefly on the divine nature that was in him, leaving the human element to mystics and other heretical persons, whose bodies served to flesh the swords of orthodox believers. The stream of Chris-

tianity has come to us in two channels, — one within the church, the other without the church, — and it is not hazarding too much to say that since the fourth century the true Christian life has been out of the established church, and not in it, but rather in the ranks of dissenters. From the Reformation till the latter part of the last century, we are told, the Protestant Church dwelt chiefly on the human side of Christ, and since that time many works have been written to show how the two — perfect Deity and perfect manhood — were united in his character. But, all this time, scarce any two eminent teachers agree on these points, however orthodox they may be called. What a difference between the Christ of John Gerson and John Calvin, yet were both accepted teachers and pious men. What a difference between the Christ of the Unitarians and the Methodists, yet may men of both sects be true Christians and acceptable with God. What a difference between the Christ of Matthew and John, yet both were disciples, and their influence is wide as Christendom and deep as the heart of man. But on this there is not time to enlarge.

Now, it seems clear that the notions men form about the origin and nature of the Scriptures, respecting the nature and authority of Christ, have nothing to do with Christianity except as its aids or its adversaries; they are not the foundation of its truths. These are theological questions, not religious questions. Their connection with Christianity appears accidental: for if Jesus had taught at Athens, and not at Jerusalem; if he had wrought no miracle, and none but the human nature had ever been ascribed to him; if the Old Testament had forever perished at his birth, — Christianity would still have been the word of God; it would have lost none of its truths. It would be just as true, just as

beautiful, just as lasting, as now it is; though we should have lost so many a blessed word, and the work of Christianity itself would have been, perhaps, a long time retarded.

To judge the future by the past, the former authority of the Old Testament can never return. Its present authority cannot stand. It must be taken for what it is worth. The occasional folly and impiety of its authors must pass for no more than their value; while the religion, the wisdom, the love, which make fragrant its leaves, will still speak to the best hearts as hitherto, and in accents even more divine when reason is allowed her rights. The ancient belief in the infallible inspiration of each sentence of the New Testament is fast changing, very fast. One writer, not a sceptic, but a Christian of unquestioned piety, sweeps off the beginning of Matthew; another, of a different church and equally religious, the end of John. Numerous critics strike off several epistles. The Apocalypse itself is not spared, notwithstanding its concluding curse. Who shall tell us the work of retrenchment is to stop here; that others will not demonstrate, what some pious hearts have long felt, that errors of doctrine and errors of fact may be found in many parts of the record, here and there, from the beginning of Matthew to the end of Acts? We see how opinions have changed ever since the Apostles' time; and who shall assure us that they were not sometimes mistaken in historical, as well as doctrinal matters; did not sometimes confound the actual with the imaginary; and that the fancy of these pious writers never stood in the place of their recollection?

But what if this should take place? Is Christianity then to perish out of the heart of the nations, and vanish from the memory of the world, like the religions that

were before Abraham? It must be so, if it rest on a foundation which a scoffer may shake, and a score of pious critics shake down. But this is the foundation of a theology, not of Christianity. That does not rest on the decision of Councils. It is not to stand or fall with the infallible inspiration of a few Jewish fishermen, who have writ their names in characters of light all over the world. It does not continue to stand through the forbearance of some critic, who can cut when he will the thread on which its life depends. Christianity does not rest on the infallible authority of the New Testament. It depends on this collection of books for the historical statement of its facts. In this we do not require infallible inspiration on the part of the writers, more than in the record of other historical facts. To me it seems as presumptuous, on the one hand, for the believer to claim this evidence for the truth of Christianity, as it is absurd, on the other hand, for the sceptic to demand such evidence to support these historical statements. I cannot see that it depends on the personal authority of Jesus. He was the organ through which the Infinite spoke. It is God that was manifested in the flesh by him, on whom rests the truth which Jesus brought to light, and made clear and beautiful in his life; and if Christianity be true, it seems useless to look for any other authority to uphold it, as for some one to support Almighty God. So if it could be proved — as it cannot — in opposition to the greatest amount of historical evidence ever collected on any similar point, that the Gospels were the fabrication of designing and artful men, that Jesus of Nazareth had never lived, still Christianity would stand firm, and fear no evil. None of the doctrines of that religion would fall to the ground; for, if true, they stand by themselves. But we should lose

— oh, irreparable loss! — the example of that character, so beautiful, so divine, that no human genius could have conceived it, as none, after all the progress and refinement of eighteen centuries, seems fully to have comprehended its lustrous life. If Christianity were true, we should still think it was so, not because its record was written by infallible pens, nor because it was lived out by an infallible teacher; but that it is true, like the axioms of geometry, because it is true, and is to be tried by the oracle God places in the breast. If it rest on the personal authority of Jesus alone, then there is no certainty of its truth if he were ever mistaken in the smallest matter, — as some Christians have thought he was in predicting his second coming.

These doctrines respecting the Scriptures have often changed, and are but fleeting. Yet men lay much stress on them. Some cling to these notions as if they were Christianity itself. It is about these and similar points that theological battles are fought from age to age. Men sometimes use worst the choicest treasure which God bestows. This is especially true of the use men make of the Bible. Some men have regarded it as the heathen their idol, or the savage his fetich. They have subordinated reason, conscience, and religion to this. Thus have they lost half the treasure it bears in its bosom. No doubt the time will come when its true character shall be felt. Then it will be seen that, amid all the contradictions of the Old Testament, — its legends, so beautiful as fictions, so appalling as facts; amid its predictions that have never been fulfilled; amid the puerile conceptions of God, which sometimes occur, and the cruel denunciations that disfigure both psalm and prophecy, — there is a reverence for man's nature, a sublime trust in God, and a depth of piety, rarely felt in

these cold northern hearts of ours. Then the devotion of its authors, the loftiness of their aim, and the majesty of their life, will appear doubly fair, and prophet and psalmist will warm our hearts as never before. Their voice will cheer the young, and sanctify the gray-headed; will charm us in the toil of life, and sweeten the cup death gives us when he comes to shake off this mantle of flesh. Then will it be seen that the words of Jesus are the music of heaven sung in an earthly voice, and that the echo of these words in John and Paul owe their efficacy to their truth and their depth, and to no accidental matter connected therewith. Then can the Word, which was in the beginning and now is, find access to the innermost heart of man, and speak there as now it seldom speaks. Then shall the Bible — which is a whole library of the deepest and most earnest thoughts and feelings, and piety, and love, ever recorded in human speech — be read oftener than ever before, — not with superstition, but with reason, conscience, and faith, fully active. Then shall it sustain men bowed down with many sorrows; rebuke sin, encourage virtue, sow the world broadcast and quick with the seed of love, that man may reap a harvest for life everlasting.

With all the obstacles men have thrown in its path, how much has the Bible done for mankind. No abuse has deprived us of all its blessings. You trace its path across the world from the day of Pentecost to this day. As a river springs up in the heart of a sandy continent, having its father in the skies, and its birth-place in distant unknown mountains; as the stream rolls on, enlarging itself, making in that arid waste a belt of verdure wherever it turns its way; creating palm groves and fertile plains, where the smoke of the cottager curls up at eventide, and marble cities send the gleam of their

splendor far into the sky, — such has been the course of the Bible on the earth. Despite of idolaters bowing to the dust before it, it has made a deeper mark on the world than the rich and beautiful literature of all the heathen. The first book of the Old Testament tells man he is made in the image of God; the first of the New Testament gives us the motto, Be perfect as your Father in heaven. Higher words were never spoken. How the truths of the Bible have blessed us! There is not a boy on all the hills of New England; not a girl born in the filthiest cellar which disgraces a capital in Europe, and cries to God against the barbarism of modern civilization; not a boy nor a girl all Christendom through, but their lot is made better by that great book.

Doubtless the time will come when men shall see Christ also as he is. Well might he still say, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" No! we have made him an idol, have bowed the knee before him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" called him "Lord, Lord!" but done not the things which he said. The history of the Christian world might well be summed up in one word of the evangelist — "and there they crucified him;" for there has never been an age when men did not crucify the Son of God afresh. But if error prevail for a time and grow old in the world, truth will triumph at the last, and then we shall see the Son of God as he is. Lifted up, he shall draw all nations unto him. Then will men understand the word of Jesus, which shall not pass away. Then shall we see and love the divine life that he lived. How vast has his influence been! How his spirit wrought in the hearts of his disciples, rude, selfish, bigoted, as at first they were! How it has wrought in the world! His words judge the nations. The wisest son of man

has not measured their height. They speak to what is deepest in profound men, what is holiest in good men, what is divinest in religious men. They kindle anew the flame of devotion in hearts long cold. They are spirit and life. His truth was not derived from Moses and Solomon; but the light of God shone through him, not colored, not bent aside. His life is the perpetual rebuke of all time since. It condemns ancient civilization; it condemns modern civilization. Wise men we have since had, and good men; but this Galilean youth strode before the world whole thousands of years, so much of divinity was in him. His words solve the questions of this present age. In him the Godlike and the human met and embraced, and a divine life was born. Measure him by the world's greatest sons — how poor they are! Try him by the best of men — how little and low they appear! Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet perhaps come short of the mark. But still was he not our brother; the son of man, as we are; the son of God, like ourselves? His excellence — was it not human excellence? His wisdom, love, piety, — sweet and celestial as they were, — are they not what we also may attain? In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble. Viewed in this way, how beautiful is the life of Jesus! Heaven has come down to earth, or, rather, earth has become heaven. The Son of God, come of age, has taken possession of his birthright. The brightest revelation is this of what is possible for all men, — if not now, at least hereafter. How pure is his spirit, and how encouraging its words! "Lowly sufferer," he seems to say, "see how I bore the cross. Patient laborer, be strong; see how I toiled for the

unthankful and the merciless. Mistaken sinner, see of what thou art capable. Rise up, and be blessed."

But if, as some early Christians began to do, you take a heathen view, and make him a God, the Son of God in a peculiar and exclusive sense, much of the significance of his character is gone. His virtue has no merit, his love no feeling, his cross no burthen, his agony no pain. His death is an illusion, his resurrection but a show. For if he were not a man, but a god, what are all these things? what his words, his life, his excellence of achievement? It is all nothing, weighed against the illimitable greatness of Him who created the worlds and fills up all time and space! Then his resignation is no lesson, his life no model, his death no triumph to you or me, who are not gods, but mortal men, that know not what a day shall bring forth, and walk by faith "dim sounding on our perilous way." Alas! we have despaired of man, and so cut off his brightest hope.

In respect of doctrines as well as forms, we see all is transitory. "Everywhere is instability and insecurity." Opinions have changed most on points deemed most vital. Could we bring up a Christian teacher of any age, from the sixth to the fourteenth century, for example, though a teacher of undoubted soundness of faith, whose word filled the churches of Christendom, clergymen would scarce allow him to kneel at their altar, or sit down with them at the Lord's table. His notions of Christianity could not be expressed in our forms, nor could our notions be made intelligible to his ears. The questions of his age, those on which Christianity was thought to depend, — questions which perplexed and divided the subtle doctors, — are no questions to us. The quarrels which then drove wise men mad now only excite a smile or a tear, as we are disposed to laugh or

weep at the frailty of man. We have other straws of our own to quarrel for. Their ancient books of devotion do not speak to us; their theology is a vain word. To look back but a short period, — the theological speculations of our fathers during the last two centuries, their "practical divinity," even the sermons written by genius and piety, are, with rare exceptions, found unreadable; such a change is there in the doctrines.

Now who shall tell us that the change is to stop here; that this sect or that, or even all sects united, have exhausted the river of life, and received it all in their canonized urns, so that we need draw no more out of the eternal well, but get refreshment nearer at hand? Who shall tell us that another age will not smile at our doctrines, disputes, and unchristian quarrels about Christianity, and make wide the mouth at men who walked brave in orthodox raiment, delighting to blacken the names of heretics, and repeat again the old charge, "He hath blasphemed"? Who shall tell us they will not weep at the folly of all such as fancied truth shone only into the contracted nook of their school, or sect, or coterie? Men of other times may look down equally on the heresy-hunters, and men hunted for heresy, and wonder at both. The men of all ages before us were quite as confident as we, that their opinion was truth, that their notion was Christianity and the whole thereof. The men who lit the fires of persecution, from the first martyr to Christian bigotry down to the last murder of the innocents, had no doubt their opinion was divine. The contest about transubstantiation, and the immaculate purity of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Scriptures, was waged with a bitterness unequalled in these days. The Protestant smiles at one, the Catholic at the other, and men of sense wonder at both. It might teach

us all a lesson, at least of forbearance. No doubt an age will come in which ours shall be reckoned a period of darkness, like the sixth century, — when men groped for the wall, but stumbled and fell, because they trusted a transient notion, not an eternal truth; an age when temples were full of idols, set up by human folly; an age in which Christian light had scarce begun to shine into men's hearts. But while this change goes on, while one generation of opinions passes away, and another rises up, Christianity itself, that pure religion, which exists eternal in the constitution of the soul and the mind of God, is always the same. The Word that was before Abraham, in the very beginning, will not change, for that Word is truth. From this Jesus subtracted nothing; to this he added nothing. But he came to reveal it as the secret of God, that cunning men could not understand, but which filled the souls of men meek and lowly of heart. This truth we owe to God; the revelation thereof to Jesus, our elder brother, God's chosen son.

To turn away from the disputes of the Catholics and the Protestants, of the Unitarian and the Trinitarian, of old school and new school, and come to the plain words of Jesus of Nazareth, — Christianity is a simple thing, very simple. It is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion, — the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart, — there is a God. Its watchword is, Be perfect as your Father in heaven. The only form it demands is a divine life, — doing the best thing in the best way, from the highest motives; perfect obedience to the great law of God. Its sanction is the voice of God in your heart; the perpetual presence of him who made us

and the stars over our head; Christ and the Father abiding within us. All this is very simple — a little child can understand it; very beautiful — the loftiest mind can find nothing so lovely. Try it by reason, conscience, and faith, — things highest in man's nature, — we see no redundance, we feel no deficiency. Examine the particular duties it enjoins, — humility, reverence, sobriety, gentleness, charity, forgiveness, fortitude, resignation, faith, and active love; try the whole extent of Christianity, so well summed up in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and is there anything therein that can perish? No, the very opponents of Christianity have rarely found fault with the teachings of Jesus. The end of Christianity seems to be to make all men one with God as Christ was one with him; to bring them to such a state of obedience and goodness that we shall think divine thoughts and feel divine sentiments, and so keep the law of God by living a life of truth and love. Its means are purity and prayer; getting strength from God, and using it for our fellow-men as well as ourselves. It allows perfect freedom. It does not demand all men to *think* alike, but to think uprightly, and get as near as possible at truth; not all men to *live* alike, but to live holy, and get as near as possible to a life perfectly divine. Christ set up no Pillars of Hercules, beyond which men must not sail the sea in quest of truth. He says, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. . . . Greater works than these shall ye do." Christianity lays no rude hand on the sacred peculiarity of individual genius and character. But there is no Christian sect which does not fetter a man. It would make all men think alike, or smother

their conviction in silence. Were all men Quakers or Catholics, Unitarians or Baptists, there would be much less diversity of thought, character, and life, less of truth active in the world, than now. But Christianity gives us the largest liberty of the sons of God; and were all men Christians after the fashion of Jesus, this variety would be a thousand times greater than now; for Christianity is not a system of doctrines, but rather a method of attaining oneness with God. It demands, therefore, a good life of piety within, of purity without, and gives the promise that whoso does God's will shall know of God's doctrine.

In an age of corruption, as all ages are, Jesus stood and looked up to God. There was nothing between him and the Father of all; no old world, be it of Moses or Esaias, of a living Rabbi or Sanhedrim of Rabbis; no sin or perverseness of the finite will. As the result of this virgin purity of soul and perfect obedience, the light of God shone down into the very deeps of his soul, bringing all of the Godhead which flesh can receive. He would have us do the same; worship with nothing between us and God; act, think, feel, live, in perfect obedience to him: and we never are *Christians* as he was the *Christ*, until we worship, as Jesus did, with no mediator, with nothing between us and the Father of all. He felt that God's word was in him; that he was one with God. He told what he saw, — the truth; he lived what he felt, — a life of love. The truth he brought to light must have been always the same before the eyes of all-seeing God, nineteen centuries before Christ, or nineteen centuries after him. A life supported by the principle and quickened by the sentiment of religion, if true to both, is always the same thing in Nazareth or New England. Now that divine man

received these truths from God; was illumined more clearly by "the light that lighteneth every man;" combined or involved all the truths of religion and morality in his doctrine, and made them manifest in his life. Then his words and example passed into the world, and can no more perish than the stars be wiped out of the sky. The truths he taught; his doctrines respecting man and God; the relation between man and man, and man and God, with the duties that grow out of that relation are always the same, and can never change till man ceases to be man, and creation vanishes into nothing. No; forms and opinions change and perish, but the word of God cannot fail. The form religion takes, the doctrines wherewith she is girded, can never be the same in any two centuries or two men; for since the sum of religious doctrines is both the result and the measure of a man's total growth in wisdom, virtue, and piety, and since men will always differ in these respects, so religious *doctrines* and *forms* will always differ, always be transient, as Christianity goes forth and scatters the seed she bears in her hand. But the *Christianity holy men feel in the heart*, the Christ that is born within us, is always the same thing to each soul that feels it. This differs only in degree, and not in kind, from age to age, and man to man. There is something in Christianity which no sect, from the "Ebionites" to the "Latter-Day Saints," ever entirely overlooked. This is that common Christianity which burns in the hearts of pious men.

Real Christianity gives men new life. It is the growth and perfect action of the Holy Spirit God puts into the sons of men. It makes us outgrow any form or any system of doctrines we have devised, and approach still closer to the truth. It would lead us to take what help we can find. It would make the Bible our servant, not

our master. It would teach us to profit by the wisdom and piety of David and Solomon, but not to sin their sins, nor bow to their idols. It would make us revere the holy words spoken by "godly men of old," but revere still more the word of God spoken through conscience, reason, and faith, as the holiest of all. It would not make Christ the despot of the soul, but the brother of all men. It would not tell us that even he had exhausted the fulness of God, so that he could create none greater; for with him "all things are possible," and neither Old Testament nor New Testament ever hints that creation exhausts the Creator. Still less would it tell us the wisdom, the piety, the love, the manly excellence of Jesus, was the result of miraculous agency alone, but that it was won, like the excellence of humbler men, by faithful obedience to Him who gave his Son such ample heritage. It would point to him as our brother, who went before, like the good shepherd, to charm us with the music of his words, and with the beauty of his life to tempt us up the steeps of mortal toil, within the gate of heaven. It would have us make the kingdom of God on earth, and enter more fittingly the kingdom on high. It would lead us to form Christ in the heart, on which Paul laid such stress, and work out our salvation by this. For it is not so much by the Christ who lived so blameless and beautiful eighteen centuries ago that we are saved directly, but by the Christ we form in our hearts and live out in our daily life that we save ourselves, God working with us both to will and to do.

Compare the simpleness of Christianity, as Christ sets it forth on the Mount, with what is sometimes taught and accepted in that honored name, and what a difference! One is of God, one is of man. There is something in Christianity which sects have not reached, —

something that will not be won, we fear, by theological battles, or the quarrels of pious men; still we may rejoice that Christ is preached in any way. The Christianity of sects, of the pulpit, of society, is ephemeral, — a transitory fly. It will pass off and be forgot. Some new form will take its place, suited to the aspect of the changing times. Each will represent something of truth, but no one the whole. It seems the whole race of man is needed to do justice to the whole of truth, as "the whole church, to preach the whole gospel." Truth is intrusted for the time to a perishable ark of human contrivance. Though often shipwrecked, she always comes safe to land, and is not changed by her mishap. That pure ideal religion which Jesus saw on the mount of his vision, and lived out in the lowly life of a Galilean peasant; which transforms his cross into an emblem of all that is holiest on earth; which makes sacred the ground he trod, and is dearest to the best of men, most true to what is truest in them, — cannot pass away. Let men improve never so far in civilization, or soar never so high on the wings of religion and love, they can never outgo the flight of truth and Christianity. It will always be above them. It is as if we were to fly towards a star, which becomes larger and more bright the nearer we approach, till we enter and are absorbed in its glory.

If we look carelessly on the ages that have gone by, or only on the surfaces of things as they come up before us, there is reason to fear; for we confound the truth of God with the word of man. So at a distance the cloud and the mountain seem the same. When the drift changes with the passing wind, an unpractised eye might fancy the mountain itself was gone. But the mountain stands to catch the clouds, to win the blessing they bear, and send it down to moisten the fainting violet, to form

streams which gladden valley and meadow, and sweep on at last to the sea in deep channels, laden with fleets. Thus the forms of the church, the creeds of the sects, the conflicting opinions of teachers, float round the sides of the Christian mount, and swell and toss, and rise and fall, and dart their lightning, and roll their thunder, but they neither make nor mar the mount itself. Its lofty summit far transcends the tumult, knows nothing of the storm which roars below, but burns with rosy light at evening and at morn, gleams in the splendors of the mid-day sun, sees his light when the long shadows creep over plain and moorland, and all night long has its head in the heavens, and is visited by troops of stars which never set, nor veil their face to aught so pure and high.

Let then the transient pass, fleet as it will, and may God send us some new manifestation of the Christian faith, that shall stir men's hearts as they were never stirred; some new word, which shall teach us what we are, and renew us all in the image of God; some better life, that shall fulfil the Hebrew prophecy, and pour out the spirit of God on young men and maidens, and old men and children; which shall realize the word of Christ and give us the Comforter, who shall reveal all needed things! There are Simeons enough in the cottages and churches of New England, plain men and pious women, who wait for the consolation, and would die in gladness if their expiring breath could stir quicker the wings that bear him on. There are men enough, sick and "bowed down, in no wise able to lift up themselves," who would be healed could they kiss the hand of their Saviour, or touch but the hem of his garment, — men who look up and are not fed, because they ask bread from heaven and water from the rock, not traditions or fancies, Jewish or heathen, or new or old; men enough who, with throbbing

hearts, pray for the spirit of healing to come upon the waters, which other than angels have long kept in trouble; men enough who have lain long time sick of theology, nothing bettered by many physicians, and are now dead, too dead to bury their dead, who would come out of their graves at the glad tidings. God send us a real religious life, which shall pluck blindness out of the heart, and make us better fathers, mothers, and children! a religious life that shall go with us where we go, and make every home the house of God, every act acceptable as a prayer. We would work for this, and pray for it, though we wept tears of blood while we prayed.

Such, then, is the transient, and such the permanent in Christianity. What is of absolute value never changes; we may cling round it and grow to it forever. No one can say his notions shall stand. But we may all say the truth, as it is in Jesus, shall never pass away. Yet there are always some, even religious men, who do not see the permanent element, so they rely on the fleeting, and, what is also an evil, condemn others for not doing the same. They mistake a defence of the truth for an attack upon the holy of holies; the removal of a theological error for the destruction of all religion. Already men of the same sect eye one another with suspicion and lowering brows that indicate a storm, and, like children who have fallen out in their play, call hard names. Now, as always, there is a collision between these two elements. The question puts itself to each man, "Will you cling to what is perishing, or embrace what is eternal?" This question each must answer for himself.

My friends, if you receive the notions about Christianity which chance to be current in your sect or church, solely because they are current, and thus accept the commandment of men instead of God's truth, there will

always be enough to commend you for soundness of judgment, prudence, and good sense, enough to call you Christian for that reason. But if this is all you rely upon, alas for you! The ground will shake under your feet if you attempt to walk uprightly and like men. You will be afraid of every new opinion, lest it shake down your church; you will fear "lest if a fox go up, he will break down your stone wall." The smallest contradiction in the New Testament or Old Testament, the least disagreement between the law and the gospel, any mistake of the apostles, will weaken your faith. It shall be with you "as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty."

If, on the other hand, you take the true word of God, and live out this, nothing shall harm you. Men may mock, but their mouthfuls of wind shall be blown back upon their own face. If the master of the house were called Beelzebub, it matters little what name is given to the household. The name Christian, given in mockery, will last till the world go down. He that loves God and man, and lives in accordance with that love, needs not fear what man can do to him. His religion comes to him in his hour of sadness, it lays its hand on him when he has fallen among thieves, and raises him up, heals and comforts him. If he is crucified, he shall rise again.

My friends, you this day receive, with the usual formalities, the man you have chosen to speak to you on the highest of all themes, — what concerns your life on earth, your life in heaven. It is a work for which no talents, no prayerful diligence, no piety is too great; an office that would dignify angels, if worthily filled. If the eyes of this man be holden, that he *cannot* discern

between the perishing and the true, you will hold him guiltless of all sin in this; but look for light where it can be had, for his office will then be of no use to you. But if he sees the truth, and is scared by worldly motives, and *will* not tell it, alas for him! If the watchman see the foe coming and blow not the trumpet, the blood of the innocent is on him.

Your own conduct and character, the treatment you offer this young man, will in some measure influence him. The hearer affects the speaker. There were some places where even Jesus "did not many mighty works, because of their unbelief." Worldly motives — not seeming such — sometimes deter good men from their duty. Gold and ease have, before now, enervated noble minds. Daily contact with men of low aims takes down the ideal of life, which a bright spirit casts out of itself. Terror has sometimes palsied tongues that, before, were eloquent as the voice of persuasion. But thereby truth is not holden. She speaks in a thousand tongues, and with a pen of iron graves her sentence on the rock forever. You may prevent the freedom of speech in this pulpit if you will. You may hire you servants to preach as you bid; to spare your vices, and flatter your follies; to prophesy smooth things, and say, It is peace, when there is no peace. Yet in so doing you weaken and enthrall yourselves. And alas for that man who consents to think one thing in his closet and preach another in his pulpit! God shall judge him in his mercy, not man in his wrath. But over his study and over his pulpit might be writ, EMPTINESS; on his canonical robes, on his forehead and right hand, DECEIT! DECEIT!

But, on the other hand, you may encourage your brother to tell you the truth. Your affection will then

be precious to him, your prayers of great price. Every evidence of your sympathy will go to baptize him anew to holiness and truth. You will then have his best words, his brightest thoughts, and his most hearty prayers. He may grow old in your service, blessing and blest. He will have —

> "The sweetest, best of consolation,
> The thought, that he has given,
> To serve the cause of Heaven,
> The freshness of his early inspiration."

Choose as you will choose; but weal or woe depends upon your choice.

THE BIBLE.

VIEW it in what light we may, the Bible is a very surprising phenomenon. In all Christian lands, this collection of books is separated from every other, and called sacred; others are profane. Science may differ from them, not from this. It is deemed a condescension on the part of its friends, to show its agreement with reason. How much has been written by condescending theologians to show the Bible was not inconsistent with the demonstrations of Newton! Should a man attempt to re-establish the cosmogonies of Hesiod and Sanchoniathon, to allegorize the poems of Anacreon and Theocritus as divines mystify the Scripture, it would be said he wasted his oil, and truly.

This collection of books has taken such a hold on the world as no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation alike despised in ancient and modern times. It is read of a Sunday in all the thirty thousand pulpits of our land. In all the temples of Christendom is its voice lifted up, week by week. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colors the talk of the street. The bark of the merchant cannot sail the sea without it; no ship of war goes to the conflict but the Bible is there! It enters men's closets; mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. The affianced maiden

prays God in Scripture for strength in her new duties; men are married by Scripture. The Bible attends them in their sickness; when the fever of the world is on them, the aching head finds a softer pillow if such leaves lie underneath. The mariner, escaping from shipwreck, clutches this first of his treasures, and keeps it sacred to God. It goes with the peddler, in his crowded pack; cheers him at eventide, when he sits down dusty and fatigued; brightens the freshness of his morning face. It blesses us when we are born; gives names to half Christendom; rejoices with us; has sympathy for our mourning; tempers our grief to finer issues. It is the better part of our sermons. It lifts man above himself; our best of uttered prayers are in its storied speech, wherewith our fathers and the patriarchs prayed. The timid man, about awaking from this dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture and his eye grows bright; he does not fear to stand alone, to tread the way unknown and distant, to take the death-angel by the hand and bid farewell to wife, and babes, and home. Men rest on this their dearest hopes. It tells them of God, and of his blessed Son; of earthly duties and of heavenly rest. Foolish men find it the source of Plato's wisdom, and the science of Newton, and the art of Raphael; wicked men use it to rivet the fetters on the slave. Men who believe nothing else that is spiritual believe the Bible all through; without this they would not confess, say they, even that there was a God.

Now, for such effects there must be an adequate cause. That nothing comes of nothing is true all the world over. It is no light thing to hold with an electric chain a thousand hearts, though but an hour, beating and bounding with such fiery speed. What is it then to hold the Christian world, and that for centuries? Are men fed

with chaff and husks? The authors we reckon great, whose word is in the newspaper and the market-place, whose articulate breath now sways the nation's mind, will soon pass away, giving place to other great men of a season, who in their turn shall follow them to eminence, and then oblivion. Some thousand "famous writers" come up in this century, to be forgotten in the next. But the silver cord of the Bible is not loosed, nor its golden bowl broken, as Time chronicles his tens of centuries passed by. Has the human race gone mad? Time sits as a refiner of metal; the dross is piled in forgotten heaps, but the pure gold is reserved for use, passes into the ages, and is current a thousand years hence as well as to-day. It is only real merit that can long pass for such. Tinsel will rust in the storms of life. False weights are soon detected there. It is only a heart that can speak, deep and true, to a heart; a mind to a mind; a soul to a soul; wisdom to the wise, and religion to the pious. There must then be in the Bible, mind, conscience, heart and soul, wisdom and religion. Were it otherwise how could millions find it their lawgiver, friend, and prophet? Some of the greatest of human institutions seem built on the Bible; such things will not stand on heaps of chaff, but mountains of rocks.

What is the secret cause of this wide and deep influence? It must be found in the Bible itself, and must be adequate to the effect. To answer the question we must examine the Bible, and see whence it comes, what it contains, and by what authority it holds its place. If we look superficially, it is a collection of books in human language, from different authors and times; we refer it to a place amongst other books, and proceed to examine it as the works of Homer and Xenophon. But the popular opinion bids us beware, for we tread on holy

ground. The opinion commonly expressed by the Protestant churches is this: The Bible is a miraculous collection of miraculous books; every word it contains was written by a miraculous inspiration from God, which was so full, complete, and infallible, that the authors delivered the truth and nothing but the truth; that the Bible contains no false statement of doctrine or fact, but sets forth all religious and moral truth which man needs, or which it is possible for him to receive, and no particle of error: therefore, that the Bible is the only authoritative rule of religious faith and practice. To doubt this is reckoned a dangerous error, if not an unpardonable sin. This is the supernatural view. Some scholars slyly reject the divine authority of the Old Testament; others reject it openly, but cling strongly as ever to the New; some make a distinction between the genuine and the spurious books of the New Testament. Thus there is a difference in the less or more of an inspired and miraculous canon. The modern Unitarians have perhaps reduced the Scripture to its lowest terms. But Protestants, in general, in America, agree that in the whole or in part the Bible is an infallible and exclusive standard of religious and moral truth. The Bible is master to the soul, — superior to intellect, truer than conscience, greater and more trustworthy than the affections and the soul.

Accordingly, with strict logical consistency, a peculiar method is used both in the criticism and interpretation of the Bible; such as men apply to no other ancient documents. A deference is paid to it wholly independent of its intrinsic merit. It is presupposed that each book within the lids of the Bible has an absolute right to be there, and each sentence or word therein is infallibly true. Reason has nothing to do in the premises

but accept the written statement of "the Word;" the duty of belief is just the same whether the Word contradicts reason and conscience, or agrees with them.

This opinion about the Bible is true, or not true. If true it is capable of proof, at least of being shown to be probable. Now there are but four possible ways of establishing the fact, namely: —

1. By the authority of churches, having either a miraculous inspiration or a miraculous tradition, to prove the alleged infallibility of the Bible. But the churches are not agreed on this point. The Roman Church very stoutly denies the fact, and besides, the Protestants deny the authority of the Roman Church.

2. By the direct testimony of God in our consciousness, assuring us of the miraculous infallibility of the Bible. This would be at the best one miracle to prove another, which is not logical. The proof is only subjective, and is as valuable to prove the divinity of the Koran, the Shaster, and the Book of Mormon, as that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. It is the argument of the superstitious and enthusiastical.

3. By the fact that the Bible claims this divine infallibility. This is reasoning in a circle, though it is the method commonly relied on by Christians. It will prove as well the divinity of any impostor who claims it.

4. By an examination of the contents of the Bible, and the external history of its origin. To proceed in this way, we must ask, Are all its statements infallibly true? But to ask this question presupposes the standard-measure is in ourselves, not in the Bible; so at the utmost the book can be no more infallible, and have no more authority, than reason and the moral sense by which we try it. A single mistake condemns its infallibility, and of course its divinity. But the case is still

worse. After the truth of a book is made out, before a work in human language, like other books, can be referred to God as its author, one of two things must be shown: either that its contents could not have come from man, — and then it follows by implication that they came from God, — or that at a certain time and place, God did miraculously reveal the contents of the book.

Now it is a notorious fact, first, that it has not been and cannot be proved that every statement in the Bible is true; or, secondly, that its contents, such as they are, could not have proceeded from man, under the ordinary influence of God; or, finally, that any one book or word of the Bible was miraculously revealed to man. In the absence of proof for any one of these three points, it has been found a more convenient way to assume the truth of them all, and avoid troublesome questions.

Laying aside all prejudices, if we look into the Bible in a general way, as into other books, we find facts which force the conclusion upon us that the Bible is a human work, as much as the Principia of Newton or Descartes, or the Vedas and Koran. Some things are beautiful and true, but others no man, in his reason, can accept. Here are the works of various writers, from the eleventh century before to the second century after Christ, thrown capriciously together, and united by no common tie but the lids of the bookbinder. Here are two forms of religion, which differ widely, set forth and enforced by miracles; the one ritual and formal, the other actual and spiritual; the one the religion of fear, the other of love; one final, and resting entirely on the special revelation made to Moses, the other progressive, based on the universal revelation of God, who enlightens all that come into the world; one offers only earthly recompense, the other makes immortality a motive to a divine

life; one compels men, the other invites them. One half the Bible repeals the other half. The gospel annihilates the law; the apostles take the place of the prophets, and go higher up. If Christianity and Judaism be not the same thing, there must be hostility between the Old Testament and the New Testament, for the Jewish form claims to be eternal. To an unprejudiced man this hostility is very obvious. It may indeed be said, Christianity came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them; and the answer is plain,—their historic fulfilment was their destruction.

If we look at the Bible as a whole, we find numerous contradictions; conflicting histories which no skill can reconcile with themselves or with facts; poems which the Christians have agreed to take as histories, but which lead only to confusion on that hypothesis; prophecies that have never been fulfilled, and from the nature of things never can be. We find stories of miracles which could not have happened; accounts which represent the laws of nature completely transformed, as in fairy-land,—to trust the tales of the old romancers; stories that make God a man of war, cruel, capricious, revengeful, hateful, and not to be trusted. We find amatory songs, selfish proverbs, sceptical discourses, and the most awful imprecations human fancy ever clothed in speech. Connected with these are lofty thoughts of nature, man, and God; devotion touching and beautiful, and a most reverent faith. Here are works whose authors are known; others, of which the author, age, and country are alike forgotten. Genuine and spurious works, religious and not religious, are strangely mixed.

This doctrine of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures has greater power with Christians at this day than

in Paul's time. In the first ages of Christianity each apostle was superior to the Old Testament. There were no Scriptures to rely on, for the New Testament was not written, and the Old Testament was hostile. The law stood in their way,—a law of sin and death; the greatest prophets were inferior to John the Baptist, and the least in the Christian kingdom was greater than he; all before Jesus were "thieves and robbers" in comparison. Yet Christianity stood without the New Testament. It went forward without it, made converts, and produced a wondrous change in the world. The Old Testament was the servant, not the master of the early Christians. Each church used what it saw fit. Some had the whole of the Old Testament, some but a part; others added the Apocrypha; for there was no settled canon "published by authority, and appointed to be read in churches." So it was with the New Testament; some received more than we, others less. Such men as Justin, Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, refer to some other books just as they quote the New Testament. The canon of the New Testament was less certain than the Old. Men followed usage, tradition, or good sense in this matter, and at last the present collection was fixed by authority. But by what test were its limits decided? Alas, by no certain criterion.

Let us look at things as they are. Here is a collection of ancient books, spurious and genuine, Hebrew and Greek. The one part belongs to a mode of worship, formal and obsolete; the other to a religion, actual, spiritual, still alive. The one gives us a Jehovah, jealous and angry; the other a Father, full of love. Each writer in both divisions proves by his imperfections that the earth did not formerly produce a different race of men. They contradict one another, and some relate what no

testimony can render less than absurd; but yet all taken together, spite of their imperfections and positive faults, form such a collection of religious writings as the world never saw, — so deep, so divine. Are not the Christian Gospels and the Hebrew Psalms still often the best part of the Sunday service in the church? Truly, there is but one religion for the Jew, the Gentile, and the Christian, though many theologies and ceremonies for each.

Now, unless we reject this treasure entirely, one of two things must be done: either we must pretend to believe the whole, absurdities and all, make one part just as valuable as the other, — the law of Moses as the gospel of Jesus, David's curse as Christ's blessing, — and then we make the Bible our master, who puts common sense and reason to silence, and drives conscience and the religious element out of the church; or else we must accept what is true, good, and divine therein, — take each part for what it is worth, gather the good together, and leave the bad to itself, — and then we make the Bible our servant and helper, who assists common-sense and reason, stimulates conscience and religion, co-working with them all. A third thing is not possible.

Which shall be done? The practical answer was given long ago; it has always been given except in times of fanatical excitement. Because there is chaff and husks in the Bible, are we to eat of them, when there is bread enough and to spare? Pious men neglect what does not edify. Who reads gladly the curses of the Psalmist, — chapters that make God a man of war, a jealous God, the butcher of the nations? Certainly but few; let them be exhorted to repentance. Men cannot gather grapes of thorns, grasp them never so lovingly; honest men will leave the thorns, or pluck them up. Now criticism, which the thinking character of the age demands, asks

men to do consciously and thoroughly what they have always done imperfectly and with no science but that of a pious heart,—that is, to divide the word rightly; separate mythology from history, fact from fiction, what is religious and of God from what is earthly and not of God; to take the Bible for what it is worth. Fearful of the issue, we may put off the question a few years; may insist as strongly as ever on what we know to be false; ask men to believe it because in the records, and thus drive bad men to hypocrisy, good men to madness, and thinking men to "infidelity;" we may throw obstacles in the way of religion and morality, and tie the millstone of the Old and New Testaments about the neck of piety as before. We may call men "infidels and atheists" whom reason and religion compel to uplift their voice against the idolatry of the church; or we may attempt to smooth over the matter, and say nothing about it, or not what we think. But it will not do. The day of fire and fagots is ended; the toothless "Guardian of the Faith" can only bark. The question will come, though alas for that man by whom it comes.

Other religions have their sacred books, — their Korans, Vedas, Shasters, — which must be received in spite of reason as masters of the soul. Some would put the Bible on the same ground. They glory in believing whatever is prefaced with a "Thus saith the Lord;" but then all superiority of the Bible over these books disappears forever; the daylight gives place to the shadow, the law of sin and death casts out the law of the spirit of life. Let honest reason and religion pursue their own way.

The indolent and the sensual love to have a visible master in spiritual things, who will spare them the

agony of thought. Credulity, ignorance, and superstition conjure up phantoms to attend them. Some honest men find it difficult to live nobly and divine; to keep the well of life pure and undisturbed, the inward ear always open and quick to the voice of God in the soul. They see, too, how often the ignorant, the wicked, the superstitious, and the fanatical confound their own passions with the still small voice of God; they see what evil, deep and dreadful, comes of this confusion. Such is the force of prejudice, indolence, habit, they find it sometimes difficult to distinguish between right and wrong; they love to lean on the Most High, and the Bible is declared his word. They say, therefore, by their action, let us have some outward rule and authority, which, being infallible, shall help the still smallness of God's voice in the heart; it will bless us when weak; we will make it our master and obey its voice. It shall be to us as a God, and we will fall down and worship it. But alas, it is not so. The word of God — no Scripture will hold that. It speaks in a language no honest mind can fail to read. Such seem the most prominent causes that have made the Bible an idol of the Christians.

No doubt it will be said, "Such views are dangerous, for the mass of men must always take authority for truth, not truth for authority." But are they not true? If so, the consequences are not ours; they belong to the Author of truth, who can manage his own affairs, without our meddling. Is the wrong way safer than the right? No doubt it was reckoned dangerous to abandon the worship of Diana, of the cross, the saints and their relics; but the world stands, though "the image that fell down from Jupiter" is forgotten. If these doctrines be true, men need not fear they shall have no "standard of religious faith and practice." Reason, conscience, heart,

and soul still remain, — God's voice in nature; his word in man. His laws remain ever unchanged, though we set up our idols or pluck them down. We still have the same guide with Moses and David, Socrates and Zoroaster, Paul and John and Luther, Fénelon, Taylor, and Fox; yes, the same guide that led Jesus, the first-born of many brothers, in his steep and lonely pilgrimage.

This doctrine takes nothing from the Bible but its errors, which only weaken its strength; its truth remains, brilliant and burning with the light of life. It calls us away from each outward standard to the eternal truths of God; from the letter and the imperfect Scripture of the word to the living Word itself. Then we see the true relation the Bible sustains to the soul; the cause of the real esteem in which it is held is seen to be in its moral and religious truths; their power and loveliness appear. These have had the greatest influence on the loftiest minds and the lowliest hearts for eighteen hundred years. How they have written themselves all over the world, deepest in the best of men! What greatness of soul has been found amid the fragrant leaves of the Bible, sufficient to lead men to embrace its truths, though at the expense of accepting tales which make the blood curdle!

Take the Bible for what is true in it, and the first chapter of Genesis is a grand hymn of creation, a worthy prelude of the sublime chants that follow. It sings this truth: The world was not always; is not the work of chance, but of the living God; all things are good, made to be blest. The writer, — who, perhaps, never thought he was writing "an article of faith," — if he were a Jew, might superstitiously refer the Sabbath to the time of creation and the agency of God, just as the Greek refers one festival to Hercules and another to Bacchus. Then

oriental piety comes beautiful from the grave hewn in the rock by our dull theology; utters her word of counsel and hope; sings her mythological poem, and warms the heart, but does not teach theology, or physical science.

The sweet notes of David's prayer; his mystic hymn of praise, so full of rippling life; his lofty psalm, which seems to unite the warbling music of the wind, the sun's glance, and the rush of the lightning; which calls on the mountain and the sea, and beast, and bird, and man, to join his full heart, — all these shall be sweet and elevating, but we shall leave his pernicious curse to perish where it fell.

The excellence of the Hebrew devotional hymns has never been surpassed. Heathenism, Christianity, with all their science, arts, literature, bright and many-colored, have little that approach these. They are the despair of imitators, still the uttered prayer of the Christian world. Tell us of Greece, whose air was redolent of song; its language such as Jove might speak; its sages, heroes, poets, honored in every clime, — they have no psalm of prayer and praise like these Hebrews, the devoutest of men, who saw God always before them, ready to take them up when father and mother let them fall.

Some of the old prophets were men of stalwart and robust character, set off by a masculine piety that puts to shame our puny littleness of heart. They saw hope the plainest when danger was most imminent, and never despaired. Fear of the people, the rulers, the priests, could not awe them to silence, nor gold buy smooth things from the prophet's tongue. They left hypocrisy, with his weeds and weepers, and feigning but unstained handkerchief, to follow the coffin he knew to be empty,

and went their own way, as men. What shall screen the guilty from the prophet's word? Even David is met with a "Thou art the man." What if they were stoned, imprisoned, sawn asunder? It was a prophet's reward. They did not prophesy smooth things; they gave the truth and took blows, not asking love for love. If these men are set up as masters of the soul, justice must break her staff over their heads. But view them as patriots whom danger aroused from the repose of life; as pious men awakened by concern for the public virtue, — and nobler men never spoke speech.

> "Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old."

Little needs now be said of the New Testament, of the simple truth that rustles in its leaves, its parables, epistles, where Paul lifts up his manly voice, and John, or whoso wrote the words, pours out the mystic melody of his faith. Why tell the deep words of Jesus? Have we exhausted their meaning? The world — has it outgrown love to God and man? They still act in gentle bosoms, giving strength to the strong, and justice and meekness and charity and faith to beautiful souls, long tried and oppressed. There is no need of new words to tell of this.

Now it is not in nature to respect the false, and yet reverence the true. Call the Bible master, we do not see the excellence it has. Take it as other books, we have its beauty, truth, religion, not its deformities, fables, and theology. We shall not believe in ghosts, though Isaiah did; nor in devils, though Jesus teach there are such. We shall see the excellence of Paul in his manly character, not in the miracles wrought by his apron; the nobleness of Jesus, in the doctrine he taught and

the life he lived, not in the walk on the water or the miraculous draughts of fish. We shall care little about the "endless genealogies and old-wives' fables," though still deemed essential by many, but much for being good and doing good. Our faith — let him shake down the Andes who has an arm for that work.

On the other hand, he that accepts the monstrous prodigies of the Gospels, — is delighted to believe that Jesus had divine authority for laying on forms, and damning all but the baptized; that he gave Peter authority to bind and loose on earth and in heaven; commanded his disciples to make friends of "the mammon of unrighteousness," to tease God, as an unjust judge, into compliance, with vain repetitions, — can he accept the absolute religion? It is not possible for a long time to make serious things of trifles, without making trifles of serious things. Cannot drunkenness be justified out of the Old Testament, — the very Solomon advising the poor man to drown his sorrows in wine? Jeremiah curses the man that will not fight.[1] Is not Sarah commended by the Fathers of the Church, and Abraham by the Sons? Men justify slavery out of the New Testament, because Paul had not his eye open to the evil, but sent back a fugitive! It is dangerous to rely on a troubled fountain for the water of life.

The good influence of the Bible, past and present, as of all religious books, rests on its religious significance. Its truths not only sustain themselves, but the mass of errors connected therewith. Truth can never pass away. Men sometimes fear the Bible will be destroyed by freedom of thought and freedom of speech. Let it perish if such be the case. Truth cannot fear the light, nor are men so mad as to forsake a well of living water.

[1] Proverbs xxxvi. 6, et seq.; Jer. xlviii. 10.

All the free-thinking in the world could not destroy the Iliad; how much less the truths of the Bible. Things at last will pass for their true value. The truths of the Bible, which have fed and comforted the noblest souls for so many centuries, may be trusted to last our day. The Bible has already endured the greatest abuse at the hands of its friends, who make it an idol, and would have all men do it homage. We need call none our Master but the Father of all. Yet the Bible, if wisely used, is still a blessed teacher. Spite of the superstition and folly of its worshippers, it has helped millions to that fountain where Moses and Jesus, with the holy-hearted of all time, have stooped and been filled. We see the mistakes of its writers, for though noble and of great stature, they saw not all things. We reject their follies; but their words of truth are still before us, to admonish, to encourage, and to bless. From time to time God raises up a prophet to lead mankind. He speaks his word as it is given him; serves his generation for the time, and falls at last, when it is expedient he should give way to the next Comforter whom God shall send. But mankind is greater than a man, and never dies. The experience of the past lives in the present. The light that shone at Nineveh, Egypt, Judea, Athens, Rome, shines no more from those points, — it is everywhere. Can Truth decease, and a good idea once made real ever perish? Mankind, moving solemnly on its appointed road, from age to age, passes by its imperfect teachers, guided by their light, blessed by their toil, and sprinkled with their blood. But Truth, like her God, is before and above us forever. So we pass by the lamps of the street, with wonder at their light, though but a smoky glare; they seem to change places and burn dim in the distance as we go on; at last the solid walls

of darkness shut them in. But high over our head are the unsullied stars, which never change their place, nor dim their eye. So the truths of the Scriptures will teach forever, though the record perish and its authors be forgot. They came from God, through the soul of man. They have exhausted neither God nor the soul. Man is greater than the Bible. That is one ray out of the sun; one drop from the infinite ocean. The inward Christ, which alone abideth for ever, has much to say which the Bible never told, much which the historical Jesus never knew. The Bible is made for man, not man for the Bible. Its truths are old as the creation, repeated more or less purely in every tongue. Let its errors and absurdities no longer be forced on the pious mind, but perish forever; let the word of God come through conscience, reason, and holy feeling, as light through the windows of morning. Worship with no master but God, no creed but truth, no service but love, and we have nothing to fear.

A SERMON ON IMMORTAL LIFE.

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God: their hope is full of immortality. — Wisdom of Solomon iii. 1, 4.

It is the belief of mankind that we shall all live forever. This is not a doctrine of Christianity alone. It belongs to the human race. You may find nations so rude that they live houseless, in caverns of the earth; nations that have no letters, not knowing the use of bows and arrows, fire, or even clothes; but no nation without a belief in immortal life. The form of that belief is often grotesque and absurd; the mode of proof ridiculous; the expectations of what the future life is to be are often childish and silly. But notwithstanding all that, the fact still remains, — the belief that the soul of a man never dies.

How did mankind come by this opinion? "By a miraculous revelation," says one. But according to the common theory of miraculous revelations, the race could not have obtained it in this way, for according to that theory the heathen had no such revelations; yet we find this doctrine the settled belief of the whole heathen world. The Greeks and Romans believed it long before Christ; the Chaldees, with no pretence to miraculous inspiration, taught the idea of immortality; while the Jews, spite of their alleged revelations, rested only in the dim sentiment thereof.

It was not arrived at by reasoning. It requires a good deal of hard thinking to reason out and prove this

matter. Yet you find this belief among nations not capable as yet of that art of thinking, and to that degree, — nations who never tried to prove it, and yet believe it as confidently as we. The human race did not sit down and think it out; never waited till they could prove it by logic and metaphysics; did not delay their belief till a miraculous revelation came to confirm it. It came to mankind by intuition; by instinctive belief, — the belief which comes unavoidably from the nature of man. In this same way came the belief in God, the love of man, the sentiment of justice. Men could see, and knew they could see, before they proved it; before they had theories of vision; without waiting for a miraculous revelation to come and tell them they had eyes, and might see if they would look. Some faculties of the body act spontaneously at first; so others of the spirit.

Immortality is a fact of man's nature, so it is a part of the universe, — just as the sun is a fact in the heavens and a part of the universe. Both are writings from God's hand, each therefore a revelation from him, and of him, — only not miraculous, but natural, regular, normal. Yet each is just as much a revelation from him as if the great Soul of all had spoken in English speech to one of us and said, "There is a sun there in the heavens, and thou shalt live forever." Yes, the fact is more certain than such speech would make it, for this fact speaks always, — a perpetual revelation; and no words can make it more certain.

As a man attains consciousness of himself, he attains consciousness of his immortality. At first he asks proof no more of his eternal existence than of his present life; instinctively he believes both. Nay, he does not separate the two; this life is one link in that golden and electric chain of immortality; the next life another and

more bright, but in the same chain. Immortality is what philosophers call an ontological fact; it belongs essentially to the being of man, just as the eye is a physiological fact and belongs to the body of man. To my mind this is the great proof of immortality, — the fact that it is written in human nature; written there so plain that the rudest nations have not failed to find it, to know it; written just as much as form is written on the circle, and extension on matter in general. It comes to our consciousness as naturally as the notions of time and space. We feel it as a desire; we feel it as a fact. What is thus in man is writ there of God, who writes no lies. To suppose that this universal desire has no corresponding gratification, is to represent him not as the Father of all, but as only a deceiver. I feel the longing after immortality, — a desire essential to my nature, deep as the foundation of my being; I find the same desire in all men. I feel conscious of immortality; that I am not to die, — no, never to die, though often to change. I cannot believe this desire and consciousness are felt only to mislead, to beguile, to deceive me. I know God is my Father, and the Father of the nations. Can the Almighty deceive his children? For my own part, I can conceive of nothing which shall make me more certain of my immortality. I ask no argument from learned lips. No miracle could make me more sure; no, not if the sheeted dead burst cerement and shroud, and rising forth from their honored tombs stood here before me, — the disenchanted dust once more enchanted with that fiery life; no, not if the souls of all my sires since time began came thronging round, and with miraculous speech told me they lived and I should also live. I could only say, "I knew all this before, why waste your heavenly speech!" I have now indubitable certainty of eternal

life. Death, removing me to the next state, can give me infallible certainty.

But there are men who doubt of immortality. They say they are conscious of the want, not of the fact. They need a proof. The exception here proves the rule. You do not doubt your personal and conscious existence now; you ask no proof of that; you would laugh at me should I try to convince you that you are alive and self-conscious. Yet one of the leaders of modern philosophy wanted a proof of his as a basis for his science, and said, "I am because I think." But his thought required proof as much as his being; yes, logically more, for being is the ground of thinking, not thinking of being. At this day there are sound men who deny the existence of this outward world, declaring it only a dream-world. This ground, they say, and yonder sun have been but in fancy, like the sun and ground you perchance dreamed of last night, whose being was only a being dreamed. These are exceptional men, and help prove the common rule, — that man trusts his senses and believes an outward world. Yet such are more common amongst philosophers than men who doubt of their immortal life. You cannot easily reason those men out of their philosophy and into their senses, nor by your own philosophy perhaps convince them that there is an outward world.

I think few of you came to your belief in everlasting life through reasoning. Your belief grew out of your general state of mind and heart. You could not help it. Perhaps few of you ever sat down and weighed the arguments for and against it, and so made up your mind. Perhaps those who have the firmest consciousness of the fact are least familiar with the arguments which confirm that consciousness. If a man disbelieves it, if he denies it, his opinion is not often to be changed immediately or

directly by argument. His special conviction has grown out of his general state of mind and heart, and is only to be removed by a change in his whole philosophy. I am not honoring men for their belief, nor blaming men who doubt or deny. I do not believe any one ever willingly doubted this; ever purposely reasoned himself into the denial thereof. Men doubt because they cannot help it; not because they will, but must.

There are a great many things true which no man as yet can prove true; some things so true that nothing can make them plainer, or more plainly true. I think it is so with this doctrine, and therefore, for myself, ask no argument. With my views of man, of God, of the relation between the two, I want no proof, satisfied with my own consciousness of immortality. Yet there are arguments which are fair, logical, just, which satisfy the mind, and may, perhaps, help persuade some men who doubt, if such men there are amongst you. I think that immortality is a fact of consciousness; a fact given in the constitution of man: therefore a matter of sentiment. But it requires thought to pick it out from amongst the other facts of consciousness. Though at first merely a feeling, a matter of sentiment, on examination it becomes an idea,—a matter of thought. It will bear being looked at in the sharpest and dryest light of logic. Truth never flinches before reason. It is so with our consciousness of God; that is an ontological fact, a fact given in the nature of man. At first it is a feeling, a matter of sentiment. By thought we abstract this fact from other facts; we find an idea of God. That is a matter of philosophy, and the analyzing mind legitimates the idea, and at length demonstrates the existence of God, which we first learned without analysis, and by intuition. A great deal has been written to prove the existence of

God, and that by the ablest men; yet I cannot believe that any one was ever reasoned directly into a belief in God by all those able men, nor directly out of it by all the sceptics and scoffers. Indirectly such works affect men, change their philosophy and modes of thought, and so help them to one or the other conclusion.

The idea of immortality, like the idea of God, in a certain sense is born in us, and fast as we come to consciousness of ourselves we come to consciousness of God, and of ourselves as immortal. The higher we advance in wisdom, goodness, piety, the larger place do God and immortality hold in our experience and inward life. I think that is the regular and natural process of a man's development. Doubt of either seems to me an exception, an irregularity. Causes that remove the doubt must be general more than special.

However, in order to have a basis of thought and reasoning, as well as of intuition and reason, let me mention some of the arguments for everlasting life.

I. The first is drawn from the general belief of mankind. The greatest philosophers and the most profound and persuasive religious teachers of the whole world have taught this. That is an important fact, for these men represent the consciousness of mankind in the highest development it has yet reached, and in such points are the truest representatives of man. What is more, the human race believes it, not merely as a thing given by miraculous revelation, not as a matter proven by science, not as a thing of tradition resting on some man's authority, but believes it instinctively, not knowing and not asking why, or how; believes it as a fact of consciousness. Now, in a matter of this sort the opinion of the human race is worth considering. I do not value very much the opinion of a priesthood in Rome or Judea

or elsewhere, on this point or any other, for they may have designs adverse to the truth. But the general sentiment of the human race in a matter like this is of the greatest importance. This general sentiment of mankind is a quite different thing from public opinion, which favors freedom in one country and slavery in another; this sentiment of mankind relates to what is a matter of feeling with most men. It is only a few thinkers that have made it a matter of thought. The opinion of mankind, so far as we know, has not changed on this point for four thousand years. Since the dawn of history, man's belief in immortality has continually been developing and getting deeper fixed.

Still more, this belief is very dear to mankind. Let me prove that. If it were true that one human soul was immortal and yet was to be eternally damned, getting only more clotted with crime and deeper bit by agony as the ages went slowly by, then immortality were a curse, not to that man only, but to all mankind; for no amount of happiness, merited or undeserved, could ever atone or make up for the horrid wrong done to that one most miserable man. Who of you is there that could relish heaven, or even bear it for a moment, knowing that a brother was doomed to smart with ever greatening agony, while year on year, and age on age, the endless chain of eternity continued to coil round the flying wheels of hell? I say the thought of one such man would fill even heaven with misery, and the best man of men would scorn the joys of everlasting bliss, would spurn at heaven and say, "Give me my brother's place; for me there is no heaven while he is there!" Now it has been popularly taught that not one man alone, but the vast majority of all mankind, are thus to be condemned, — immortal only to be everlastingly wretched.

That is the popular doctrine now in this land; it has been so taught in the Christian churches these sixteen centuries and more, — taught in the name of Christ! Such an immortality would be a curse to men, to every man; as much so to the "saved" as to the "lost;" for who would willingly stay in heaven, and on such terms? Surely not he who wept with weeping men! Yet in spite of this vile doctrine drawn over the world to come, mankind religiously believes that each shall live forever. This shows how strong is the instinct which can lift up such a foul and hateful doctrine and still live on. Tell me not that scoffers and critics shall take away man's faith in endless life; it has stood a harder test than can ever come again.

II. The next argument is drawn from the nature of man.

1. All men desire to be immortal. This desire is instinctive, natural, universal. In God's world such a desire implies the satisfaction thereof, equally natural and universal. It cannot be that God has given man this universal desire of immortality, this belief in it, and yet made it all a mockery. Man loves truth, tells it, rests only in it; how much more God, who is the trueness of truth. Bodily senses imply their objects, — the eye light, the ear sound; the touch, the taste, the smell, things relative thereto. Spiritual senses likewise foretell their object, — are silent prophecies of endless life. The love of justice, beauty, truth, of man and God, points to realities unseen as yet. We are ever hungering after noblest things, and what we feed on makes us hunger more. The senses are satisfied, but the soul never.

2. Then, too, while this composite body unavoidably decays, this simple soul which is my life decays not; reason, the affections, all the powers that make the man,

decay not. True, the organs by which they act become impaired. But there is no cause for thinking that love, conscience, reason, will ever become weaker in man; but cause for thinking that all these continually become more strong. Was the mind of Newton gone when his frame, long over-tasked, refused its wonted work?

3. Here on earth, everything in its place and time matures. The acorn and the chestnut, things natural to this climate, ripen every year. A longer season would make them no better nor bigger. It is so with our body; that, under proper conditions, becomes mature. It is so with all the things of earth. But man is not fully grown, as the acorn and the chestnut; never gets mature. Take the best man and the greatest, — all his faculties are not developed, fully grown and matured. He is not complete in the qualities of a man; nay, often half his qualities lie all unused. Shall we conclude these are never to obtain development and do their work? The analogy of nature tells us that man, the new-born plant, is but removed by death to another soil, where he shall grow complete and become mature.

4. Then, too, each other thing, under its proper conditions, not only ripens but is perfect also after its kind. Each clover-seed is perfect as a star. Every lion, as a general rule, is a common representation of all lionhood; the ideal of his race made real in him, a thousand years of life would not make him more. But where is the Adamitic man, — the type and representative of his race, who makes actual its idea? Even Jesus bids you not call him good; no man has all the manhood of mankind. Yes, there are rudiments of greatness in us all, but abortive, incomplete, and stopped in embryo. Now, all these elements of manhood point as directly to another state as the unfinished walls of yonder rising church

intimate that the work is not complete, that the artist here intends a roof, a window there, here a tower, and over all a heaven-piercing spire. All men are abortions, our failure pointing to the real success. Nay, we are all waiting to be born, our whole nature looking to another world, and dimly presaging what that world shall be. Death, however we misname him, seasonable or out of time, is the birth-angel, that alone.

5. Besides, the presence of injustice, of wrong, points the same way. The fact that one man goes out of this life in childhood, in manhood, at any time before the natural measure of his days is full; the fact that any one is by circumstances made wretched; that he is hindered from his proper growth, and has not here his natural due, — all intimates to me his future life. I know that God is just. I know his justice too shall make all things right, for he must have the power, the wish, the will therefor, to speak in human speech. I see the injustice in this city, its pauperism, suffering, and crime, men smarting all their life, and by no fault of theirs. I know there must be another hemisphere to balance this; another life, wherein justice shall come to all and for all. Else God were unjust; and an unjust God to me is no God at all, but a wretched chimera which my soul rejects with scorn. I see the autumn prefigured in the spring. The flowers of May-day foretold the harvest, its rosy apples and its yellow ears of corn. As the bud now lying cold and close upon the bark of every tree throughout our northern clime is a silent prophecy of yet another spring and other summers, and harvests too, so this instinctive love of justice, scantly budding here and nipped by adverse fate, silently but clearly tells of a kingdom of heaven. I take some miserable child here in this city, squalid in dress and look, ignorant and

wicked too as most men judge of vagrant vice, made so by circumstances over which that child had no control; I turn off with a shudder at the public wrong we have done and still are doing; but in that child I see proof of another world, yes, heaven glittering from behind those saddened eyes. I know that child has a man's nature in him, perhaps a Channing's trusting piety; perhaps a Newton's mind, — has surely rudiments of more than these; for what were Channing, Newton, both of them, but embryo men? I turn off with a shudder at the public wrong, but a faith in God's justice, in that child's eternal life, which nothing can ever shake.

III. A third argument is drawn from the nature of God. He, as the Infinite, the Unconditioned, the Absolute, is all-powerful, all-wise, all-good. Therefore he must wish the best of all possible things; must know the best of all possible things; must will the best of all possible things, and so bring it to pass. Life is a possible thing; eternal life is possible. Neither implies a contradiction; yes, to me they seem necessary, more than possible. Now, then, as life, serene and happy life, is better than non-existence, so immortality is better than perpetual death. God must know that, wish that, will that, and so bring that about. Man, therefore, must be immortal. This argument is brief indeed, but I see not how it can be withstood.

I do not know that one of you doubts of eternal life. If any does, I know not if these thoughts will ever affect his doubt. Still I think each argument is powerful, — to one that thinks, reasons, balances, and then decides, exceeding powerful. All put together form a mass of argument which, as it seems to me, no logic can resist. Yet I beg you to understand that I do not rest immortality on any reasoning of mine, but on reason itself; not

on these logical arguments, but on man's consciousness, and the instinctive belief which is common to the human race. I believed my immortality before I proved it; believed it just as strongly then as now. Nay, could some doubter rise, and, to my thinking, vanquish all these arguments, I should still hold fast my native faith, nor fear the doubter's arms. The simple consciousness of men is stronger than all forms of proof. Still, if men want arguments — why, there they are.

The belief in immortality is one thing; the special form thereof, the definite notion of the future life, another and quite different. The popular doctrine in our churches I think is this: That this body which we lay in the dust shall one day be raised again, the living soul joined on anew, and both together live the eternal life. But where is the soul all this time, between our death-day and our day of rising? Some say it sleeps unconscious, dead all this time; others, that it is in heaven now, or else in hell; others, in a strange and transient home, imperfect in its joy or woe, waiting the final day and more complete account. It seems to me this notion is absurd and impossible, — absurd in its doctrine relative to the present condition of departed souls; impossible in what it teaches of the resurrection of this body. If my soul is to claim the body again, which shall it be, the body I was born into, or that I died out of? If I live to the common age of men, changing my body as I must, and dying daily, then I have worn some eight or ten bodies. So at the last, which body shall claim my soul, for the ten had her? The soul herself may claim them all. But to make the matter still more intricate, there is in the earth but a certain portion of matter out of which human bodies can be made. Considering all the millions of men now living, the myriads of millions

that have been before, it is plain, I think, that all the matter suitable for human bodies has been lived over many times. So if the world were to end to-day, instead of each old man having ten bodies from which to choose the one that fits him best, there would be ten men, all clamoring for each body! Shall I then have a handful of my former dust, and that alone? That is not the resurrection of my former body. This whole doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh seems to me impossible and absurd.

I know men refer this, as many other things no better, to Jesus. I find no satisfactory evidence that he taught the resurrection of the body; there is some evidence that he did not. I know it was the doctrine of the Pharisees of his time, of Paul, the early Christians, and more or less of the Christian churches to this day. In Christ's time in Judea, there were the Sadducees, who taught the eternal death of men; the Pharisees, who taught the resurrection of the flesh and its reunion with the soul; the Essenes, who taught the immortality of the soul, but rejected the resurrection of the body. Paul was a Pharisee, and in his letters taught the resurrection of the dead, the belief of the Pharisees. From him it has come down to us, and in the creed of many churches it is still written, "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh." Many doubted this in early times, but the council of Nice declared all men accursed who dared to doubt the resurrection of the flesh. I mention this as absurd and impossible, because it is still, I fear, the popular belief, and lest some should confound the doctrine of immortality with this tenet of the Pharisees. Let it be remembered the immortality of the soul is one thing, the resurrection of the body another and quite different.

What is this future life? what can we know of it be-

sides its existence? Some men speak as if they knew the way around heaven as around the wards of their native city. What we can know in detail is cautiously to be inferred from the nature of man and the nature of God. I will modestly set down what it seems to me.

It must be a conscious state. Man is by his nature conscious; yes, self-conscious. He is progressive in his self-consciousness. I cannot think a removal out of the body destroys this consciousness; rather that it enhances and intensifies this. Yet consciousness in the next life must differ as much from consciousness here as the ripe peach differs from the blossom, or the bud, or the bark, or the earthly materials out of which it grew. The child is no limit to the man, nor my consciousness now to what I may be, must be hereafter.

It must be a social state. Our nature is social; our joys social. For our progress here, our happiness, we depend on one another. Must it not be so there? It must be an advance upon our nature and condition here. All the analogy of nature teaches that. Things advance from small to great; from base to beautiful. The girl grows into a woman; the bud swells into the blossom, that into the fruit. The process over, the work begins anew. How much more must it be so in the other life. What old powers we shall discover, now buried in the flesh, what new powers shall come upon us in that new state, no man can know; it were but poetic idleness to talk of them. We see in some great man what power of intellect, imagination, justice, goodness, piety, he reveals, lying latent in us all. How men bungle in their works of art! No Raphael can paint a dew-drop or a flake of frost. Yet some rude man, tired with his work, lies down beneath a tree, his head upon his swarthy arm, and sleep shuts, one by one, these five scant portals of

the soul, and what an artist is he made at once! How brave a sky he paints above him, with what golden garniture of clouds set off; what flowers and trees, what men and women does he not create, and moving in celestial scenes! What years of history does he condense in one short minute, and when he wakes, shakes off the purple drapery of his dream as if it were but worthless dust and girds him for his work anew! What other powers there are shut up in men, less known than this artistic phantasy,—powers of seeing the distant, recalling the past, predicting the future, feeling at once the character of men,— of this we know little, only by rare glimpses at the unwonted side of things. But yet we know enough to guess there are strange wonders there waiting to be revealed.

What form our conscious, social, and increased activity shall take, we know not. We know of that no more than before our birth we knew of this world, of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch, or the things which they reveal. We are not born into that world, have not its senses yet. This we know, that the same God, all-powerful, all-wise, all-good, rules there and then, as here and now. Who cannot trust him to do right and best for all? For my own part, I feel no wish to know how, or where, or what I shall be hereafter. I know it will be right for my truest welfare, for the good of all. I am satisfied with this trust.

Yet the next life must be a state of retribution. Thither we carry nothing but ourselves, our naked selves. Our fortune we leave behind us; our honors and rank return to such as gave; even our reputation,—the good or ill men thought we were,—clings to us no more. We go thither without our staff or scrip,—nothing but the man we are. Yet that man is the result of all

life's daily work; it is the one thing which we have brought to pass. I cannot believe men who have voluntarily lived mean, little, vulgar, and selfish lives, will go out of this and into that, great, noble, generous, good, and holy. Can the practical saint and the practical hypocrite enter on the same course of being together? I know the sufferings of bad men here, the wrong they do their nature, and what comes of that wrong. I think that suffering is the best part of sin, the medicine to heal it with. What men suffer here from their wrongdoing is its natural consequence; but all that suffering is a mercy, designed to make them better. Everything in this world is adapted to promote the welfare of God's creatures. Must it not be so in the next? How many men seem wicked from our point of view who are not so from their own; how many become infamous through no fault of theirs, — the victims of circumstances, born into crime, of low and corrupt parents whom former circumstances made corrupt! Such men cannot be sinners before God. Here they suffer from the tyranny of appetites they never were taught to subdue; they have not the joy of a cultivated mind. The children of the wild Indian are capable of the same cultivation as children here; yet they are savages. Is it always to be so? Is God to be partial in granting the favors of another life? I cannot believe it. I doubt not that many a soul rises up from the dungeon and the gallows, yes, from dens of infamy amongst men, clean and beautiful before God. Christ, says the Gospel, assured the penitent thief of sharing heaven with him — and that day. Many seem inferior to me, who in God's sight must be far before me; men who now seem too low to learn of me here, may be too high to teach me there.

I cannot think the future world is to be feared, even

by the worst of men. I had rather die a sinner than live one. Doubtless justice is there to be done; that may seem stern and severe. But remember, God's justice is not like a man's; it is not vengeance, but mercy; not poison, but medicine. To me it seems tuition more than chastisement. God is not the jailer of the universe, but the Shepherd of the people; not the hangman of mankind, but their Physician; yes, our Father. I cannot fear him as I fear men. I cannot fail to love. I abhor sin, I loathe and nauseate thereat; most of all at my own. I can plead for others and extenuate their guilt, perhaps they for mine; not I for my own. I know God's justice will overtake me, giving me what I have paid for. But I do not, cannot fear it. I know his justice is love; that if I suffer, it is for my everlasting joy. I think this is a natural state of mind. I do not find that men ever dread the future life, or turn pale on their death-bed at thought of God's vengeance, except when a priesthood has frightened them to that. The world's literature, which is the world's confession, proves what I say. In Greece, in classic days, when there was no caste of priests, the belief in immortality was current and strong. But in all her varied literature I do not remember a man dying, yet afraid of God's vengeance. The rude Indian of our native land did not fear to meet the Great Spirit face to face. I have sat by the bedside of wicked men, and while death was dealing with my brother, I have watched the tide slow ebbing from the shore, but I have known no one afraid to go. Say what we will, there is nothing stronger and deeper in men than confidence in God, — a solemn trust that he will do us good. Even the worst man thinks God his Father; and is he not? Tell me not of God's vengeance, punishing men for his own glory! There is no such thing. Talk not to me of

endless hell, where men must suffer for suffering's sake, be damned for an eternity of woe. I tell you there is no such thing, nor can there ever be. Does not even the hireling shepherd, when a single lamb has gone astray, leave the ninety and nine safe in their fold, go forth some stormy night and seek the wanderer, rejoicing to bring home the lost one on his shoulders? And shall God forget his child, his frailest or most stubborn child; leave him in endless misery, a prey to insatiate sin, — that grim, bloodthirsty wolf, prowling about the human fold? I tell you No; not God. Why, this eccentric earth forsakes the sun awhile, careering fast and far away, but that attractive power prevails at length, and the returning globe comes rounding home again. Does a mortal mother desert her son, wicked, corrupt, and loathsome though he be? If so, the wiser world cries Shame! But she does not. When her child becomes loathsome and hateful to the world, drunk with wickedness, and when the wicked world puts him away out of its sight, — strangling him to death, — that mother forgets not her child. She had his earliest kiss, from lips all innocent of coming ill, and she will have his last. Yes, she will press his cold and stiffened form to her own bosom; the bosom that bore and fed the innocent babe yearns yet with mortal longing for the murdered murderer. Infamous to the world, his very dust is sacred dust to her. She braves the world's reproach, buries her son, piously hoping that as their lives once mingled, so their ashes shall. The world, cruel and forgetful oft, honors the mother in its deepest heart. Do you tell me that culprit's mother loves her son more than God can love him? Then go and worship her. I know that when father and mother both forsake me, in the extremity of my sin, I know my God loves on. Oh yes, ye sons of men, Indian

and Greek, ye are right to trust your God. Do priests and their churches say No? — bid them go and be silent forever. No grain of dust gets lost from off this dusty globe; and shall God lose a man from off this sphere of souls? Believe it not.

I know that suffering follows sin, lasting long as the sin. I thank God it is so; that God's own angel stands there to warn back the erring Balaams, wandering towards woe. But God, who sends the rain, the dew, the sun, on me as on a better man, will, at last, I doubt it not, make us all pure, all just, all good, and so, at last, all happy. This follows from the nature of God himself, for the All-good must wish the welfare of his child; the All-wise know how to achieve that welfare; the All-powerful bring it to pass. Tell me he wishes not the eternal welfare of all men, then I say, That is not the God of the universe. I own not that as God. Nay, I tell you it is not God you speak of, but some heathen fancy, smoking up from your unhuman heart. I would ask the worst of mothers, Did you forsake your child because he went astray, and mocked your word? "Oh no," she says; "he was but a child, he knew no better, and I led him right, corrected him for his good, not mine!" Are we not all children before God; the wisest, oldest, wickedest, God's child? I am sure he will never forsake me, how wicked soever I become. I know that he is love; love, too, that never fails. I expect to suffer for each conscious, wilful wrong; I wish, I hope, I long to suffer for it. I am wronged if I do not; what I do not outgrow, live over and forget here, I hope to expiate there. I fear a sin, — not to outgrow a sin.

A man who has lived here a manly life, must enter the next under the most favorable circumstances. I do not mean a man of mere negative goodness, starting in

the road of old custom, with his wheels deep in the ruts, not having life enough to go aside, but a positively good man, one bravely good. He has lived heaven here, and must enter higher up than a really wicked man, or a slothful one, or one but negatively good. He can go from earth to heaven, as from one room to another, pass gradually, as from winter to spring. To such an one, no revolution appears needed. The next life, it seems, must be a continual progress, the improvement of old powers, the disclosure or accession of new ones. What nobler reach of thought, what profounder insight, what more heavenly imagination, what greater power of conscience, faith, and love, will bless us there and then, it were vain to calculate, it is far beyond our span. You see men now, whose souls are one with God, and so his will works through them as the magnetic fire runs on along the unimpeding line. What happiness they have, it is they alone can say. How much greater must it be there, not even they can tell. Here the body helps us to some things. Through these five small loopholes the world looks in. How much more does the body hinder us from seeing? Through the sickly body yet other worlds look in. He who has seen only the daylight, knows nothing of that heaven of stars, which all night long hang over head their lamps of gold. When death has dusted off this body from me, who will dream for me the new powers I shall possess? It were vain to try. Time shall reveal it all.

I cannot believe that any state in heaven is a final state, only a condition of progress. The bud opens into the blossom, the flower matures into the fruit. The salvation of to-day is not blessedness enough for to-morrow. Here we are, first, babes of earth, with a few senses, and those imperfect, helpless, and ignorant; then children

of earth; then youths; then men, armed with reason, conscience, affection, piety, and go on enlarging these without end. So methinks it must be there, that we shall be, first, babes of heaven, then children, next youths, and so go on growing, advancing and advancing, — our being only a becoming more and more, with no possibility of ever reaching the end. If this be true, then there must be a continual increase of being. So, in some future age, the time will come when each one of us shall have more mind, and heart, and soul, than Christ on earth; more than all men now on earth have ever had; yes, more than they and all the souls of men now passed to heaven, — shall have, each one of us, more being than they all have had, and so more truth, more soul, more faith, more rest, and bliss of life.

Do men of the next world look in upon this? Are they present with us, conscious of our deeds or thoughts? Who knows? Who can say ay or no? The unborn know nothing of the life on earth; yet the born of earth know somewhat of them, and make ready for their coming. Who knows but men born to heaven are waiting for your birth to come, have gone to prepare a place for us? All that is fancy, and not fact; it is not philosophy, but poetry; no more. Of this we may be sure, that what is best will be; what best for saint or sinner; what most conducive to their real good. That is no poetry, but unavoidable truth, which all mankind may well believe.

There are many who never attained their true stature here, yet without blameworthiness of theirs; men cheated of their growth. Many a Milton walks on his silent way, and goes down at last, not singing, and unsung. How many a possible Newton or Descartes has dug the sewers of a city, and dies, giving no sign of the wealthy soul he bore!

"Chill penury repressed his noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul."

What if the best of you had been born slaves in North Carolina, or among savages at New Zealand; nay, in some of the filthy cellars of Boston, and turned friendless into the streets; what might you have become? Surely not what you are; yet, before God, you might, perhaps, be more deserving, and at death go to a far higher place. What is so terribly wrong here must be righted there. It cannot be that God will thrust a man out of heaven because his mother was a savage, a slave, a pauper, or a criminal. It is men's impiety which does so here, not Heaven's justice there! How the wrong shall be righted I know not, care not now to know; of the fact I ask no further certainty. Many that are last shall be first. It may be that the pirate, in heaven, having outgrown his earthly sins, shall teach justice to the judge who hanged him here. They who were oppressed and trampled on, kept down, dwarfed, stinted, and emaciate in soul, must have justice done them there, and will doubtless stand higher in heaven than we, who, having many talents, used them poorly, or hid them idle in the dirt, knowing our Father's will, yet heeding not. It was Jesus that said, Many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom of God, and men calling themselves saints be thrust out.

Shall we remember the deeds of the former life, — this man that he picked rags out of the mud in the streets, and another that he ruled nations? Who can tell; nay, who need care to ask? Such a remembrance seems not needed for retribution's sake. The oak remembers not each leaf it ever bore, though each helped to form the oak, its branch and bole. How much has gone from our bodies! we know not how it came or went! How much

of our past life is gone from our memory, yet its result lives in our character! The saddler remembers not every stitch he took while an apprentice, yet each stitch helped to form the saddle.

Shall we know our friends again? For my own part I cannot doubt it; least of all when I drop a tear over their recent dust. Death does not separate them from us here. Can life in heaven do it? They live in our remembrance; memory rakes in the ashes of the dead, and the virtues of the departed flame up anew, enlightening the dim cold walls of our consciousness. Much of our joy is social here; we only half enjoy an undivided good. God made mankind, but sundered that into men, that they might help one another. Must it not be so there, and we be with our real friends? Man loves to think it; yet to trust is wiser than to prophesy. But the girl who went from us a little one may be as parent to her father when he comes, and the man who left us have far outgrown our dream of an angel when we meet again. I cannot doubt that many a man who not long ago left his body here, now far surpasses the radiant manliness which Jesus won and wore; yes, is far better, greater, too, than many poorly conceive of God.

There are times when we think little of a future life. In a period of success, serene and healthy life, the day's good is good enough for that day. But there comes a time when this day's good is not enough, its ill too great to bear. When death comes down and wrenches off a friend from our side, — wife, child, brother, father, a dear one taken, — this life is not enough. Oh, no, not to the coldest, coarsest, and most sensual man. I put it to you, to the most heartless of you all, or the most cold and doubting; when you lay down in the earth your mother, sister, wife, or child, remembering that you shall see

their face no more, — is life enough? Do you not reach out your arms for heaven, for immortality, and feel you cannot die? When I see men at a feast, or busy in the street, I do not think of their eternal life, — perhaps feel not my own; but when the stiffened body goes down to the tomb, sad, silent, remorseless, I feel there is no death for the man. That clod which yonder dust shall cover is not my brother. The dust goes to its place, the man to his own. It is then I feel my immortality. I look through the grave into heaven. I ask no miracle, no proof, no reasoning for me. I ask no risen dust to teach me immortality. I am conscious of eternal life.

But there are worse hours than these; seasons bitterer than death, sorrows that lie a latent poison in the heart, slowly sapping the foundations of our peace. There are hours when the best life seems a sheer failure to the man who lived it, his wisdom folly, his genius impotence, his best deed poor and small; when he wonders why he was suffered to be born; when all the sorrows of the world seem poured upon him; when he stands in a populous loneliness, and though weak, can only lean in upon himself. In such hour he feels the insufficiency of this life. It is only his cradle-time, he counts himself just born; all honors, wealth, and fame are but baubles in his baby hand; his deep philosophy but nursery rhymes. Yet he feels the immortal fire burning in his heart. He stretches his hands out from the swaddling-clothes of flesh, reaching after the topmost star, which he sees, or dreams he sees, and longs to go alone. Still worse, the consciousness of sin comes over him; he feels that he has insulted himself. All about him seems little; himself little, yet clamoring to be great. Then we feel our immortality; through the garish light of day we see a star or two beyond. The soul within us feels her

wings, contending to be born, impatient for the sky, and wrestles with the earthly worm that folds us in.

> "Mysterious Night! when our first Parent knew
> Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
> Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
> This glorious canopy of light and blue?
> Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
> Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
> Hesperus with the host of heaven came;
> And lo, Creation widened in man's view.
> Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
> Within thy beams, O Sun? or who could find,
> Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
> That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
> Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?
> If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?"

I would not slight this wondrous world. I love its day and night; its flowers and its fruits are dear to me. I would not wilfully lose sight of a departing cloud. Every year opens new beauty in a star, or in a purple gentian fringed with loveliness. The laws too of matter seem more wonderful the more I study them, in the whirling eddies of the dust, in the curious shells of former life buried by thousands in a grain of chalk, or in the shining diagrams of light above my head. Even the ugly becomes beautiful when truly seen. I see the jewel in the bunchy toad. The more I live, the more I love this lovely world; feel more its Author in each little thing, in all that is great. But yet I feel my immortality the more. In childhood the consciousness of immortal life buds forth feeble, though full of promise. In the man it unfolds its fragrant petals, his most celestial flower, to mature its seed throughout eternity. The prospect of that everlasting life, the perfect justice yet to come, the infinite progress before us, cheer and

comfort the heart. Sad and disappointed, full of self-reproach, we shall not be so forever. The light of heaven breaks upon the night of trial, sorrow, sin; the sombre clouds which overhung the east, grown purple now, tell us the dawn of heaven is coming in. Our faces, gleamed on by that, smile in the new-born glow; we are beguiled of our sadness before we are aware. The certainty of this provokes us to patience, it forbids us to be slothfully sorrowful. It calls us to be up and doing. The thought that all will at last be right, with the slave, the poor, the weak, and the wicked, inspires us with zeal to work for them here, and make it all right for them even now.

There is small merit in being willing to die; it seems almost sinful in a good man to wish it when the world needs him here so much. It is weak and unmanly to be always looking and sighing voluptuously for that. But it is of great comfort to have in your soul a sure trust in immortality; of great value here and now to anticipate time, and live to-day the eternal life. That we may all do. The joys of heaven will begin as soon as we attain the character of heaven and do its duties. That may begin to-day. It is everlasting life to know God, to have his Spirit dwelling in you, yourself at one with him. Try that and prove its worth. Justice, usefulness, wisdom, religion, love, are the best things we hope for in heaven. Try them on; they will fit you here not less becomingly. They are the best things of earth. Think no outlay of goodness and piety too great. You will find your reward begin here. As much goodness and piety, so much heaven. Men will not pay you, God will, — pay you now, pay you hereafter and forever.

AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D. D.

And Elisha saw it and he said: My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! — 2 Kings ii. 12.

In the singular mythical story related in the second chapter of the second book of the Kings, it is said that Elijah the Prophet was separated from the world of living mortals, and carried up to the heavens in a fiery chariot, with fiery horses, in the midst of a whirlwind. Elisha, when he saw a man of such power and usefulness as the good prophet so suddenly snatched from the earth, exclaimed, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" Since we met on the last Sabbath, intelligence has reached us of the death of the great and good Dr. Channing. I can in nowise allow that event to pass without notice in this place. However, I must say it is with the greatest diffidence that I venture to speak of him. I feel unworthy of the theme; wholly unable to do justice to so great and good a man. But it is useless to waste your time in professions of inability, which the discourse, poor and imperfect as it is, will itself carry on its face.

The facts of his life most relevant to this occasion may be stated in a few words. He was born at Newport, Rhode Island, on the seventh of April, 1780; graduated at Harvard University, with the first honors of his class, in 1798; was settled in the ministry in 1803; and died

at Bennington, Vermont, the second day of this present month.

He was known to few of this audience by face; fewer still have heard his voice. But his influence was a stranger to none of us all. His words of wisdom, piety, and love have touched our hearts, and that long ago, and often. If there are amongst us any who have read no line of his works, — and doubtless there are such in every audience, — still, the tones of his golden harp have been repeated by others, and echoed back even to their ears, by both the pulpit and the press. The sun warms the air of caverns where it never shines.

A great man, of wide reputation and deep influence, has fallen in the midst of us. It is speaking with moderation to say that no man of our century who writes the English tongue had so much weight with the wise and pious men who speak it. The evening before an election any political brawler, with confidence and a voice, can collect the "freemen," and make the mob fling up their caps and shout huzzas, which in the next year shall be turned to hissing, if not execration. Such men are thought to have influence; they have it, as boys to raise clouds of dust in a summer day. But here one has gone back to the sky who touched the mind of wise men, the heart of good men, the soul of men pious and Christian, deepening what is deepest, and appealing to what is most divine.

Of all our writers, there was none whose words found the class of readers which he addressed. He spoke on the loftiest themes, — Man, Christ, God, Duty, Life, Heaven. His word reached the best of men. At this day his noiseless influence on the soul of his countrymen was wide, deep, and beautiful. How could it be otherwise? Let those that knew him say. He was of no

party in politics; all must have smarted under his rebuke; each might have been blessed by his sublime ideal, and the wise and moderate method he took to reach it. He was of no clan or coterie in social life. The instructed man, accomplished with the learning and science of the times, saw in him an equal, to say the least; the poorest of the ignorant found here a brother, who never scorned the affinity which bound him to the humblest of his race. He was of no sect in religion; he loved piety and honored a divine life wherever he saw their light, and did not think living water impure because it flowed into an urn of different form from his own. All denominations of theology — there is but one of religion — have been blessed by him. His writings found their way where no other modern books can go: into the hearts of men of all parties, political, social, or theological. It is not saying too much to say he has done more to liberalize theology than any man now living where the English tongue is spoken. Some have gone farther, and many faster than he. They may have shed more light; but he more warmth; and after all it is the good heart, more than the wise head, that is to make our theology edifying and religious. Still, spite of Dr. Channing's catholic wisdom. there was a sectarian zeal, a social clannishness, a political bigotry amongst us, which rejected his influence, and yet remains unblessed; for of all walls, those of a party, a clan, and a sect are the hardest to break down, the most difficult to climb over, the most impossible to see through. The idols of the tribe are perhaps the last that will be given up.

Dr. Channing's influence was not confined to New England: the South and the West were warmed at his fire; not to the United States, for in England his works were more read, his spirit took a stronger and deeper

hold, than with us. The local jealousies, the party strife, the pecuniary interests, the fanaticism of a sect, had less power over his writings abroad than at home. He was not personally mingled with their discussions, nor involved in their strife, as whoever speaks must be at home, and therefore he was heard with something of the same impartiality as a voice from remote ages. The absolute value of his works was weighed more judiciously there, because the reader stood aloof from the war of opinions that went on with us. None of our writers was so well known abroad among serious and religious men; none so well represented the morality and religion of our land; none contributed so much to wipe off the foul but just imputation cast upon us, — of caring only for money, and if that came, not caring by what means, though we violate all laws of man or God, and break our faith, and butcher the Red-man, who will not work, and chain the Black-man, whom stripes compel to toil.

No American had such power abroad. His judgment on the great moral questions of the day was earnestly looked for by wise men, and respected when it came. We have had great men: men that did honor to their country and their kind; men of large soul and broad views, who have made a mark on their age; political men, that warded off the perils which hung over our heads, and helped us live together on better terms; but I hesitate not to say that, since Washington, no man has died amongst us whose real influence was so wide and so beneficent, both abroad and at home.

It may be asked, what was the *secret of his power?* It was in no uncommon gifts of mind that God gave him outright. With these, no doubt, he was sufficiently well provided; a man thoroughly well-born and amply endowed. But many of his fellow-citizens far outshone

him in this respect, who have yet no influence. He had not the power of acute analysis and rapid combination of particulars, — the faculty of seeing the soul of things, the one common property, which, as a law, runs through the many diverse particulars, — the quality that makes a philosopher. Of this he had less than many of his contemporaries who shall go down to their grave and be forgot, leaving no mark, but a stone in the churchyard, to show they once have been. Dr. Channing's analysis seems sometimes to have halted this side of the ultimate fact.

Not possessing this quality in a very eminent degree, he could not be "original" as a philosopher or theologian. His abstract opinions, or his general laws, never struck you, therefore, as his own discoveries. His *speculations* had not the charm of even apparent novelty, which imposes on the superficial whenever some unripe apple is shaken from the tree, or some withered dogma is disquieted and brought up from its place of oblivion. In matters of pure thought, Dr. Channing was never conspicuous for originality. Others went before him in all paths of philosophy, ethics, or theology which he afterwards trod.

He had not the powers of imagination which wheels over earth and through the sky, and comes rounding home at last, its chariot laden with spoils gathered from every flower and every star. Of this he had little, because others have more; though certainly he was not deficient when measured by the common scale. No one will contend that he had the creative faculty of imagination as it appears in some of his contemporaries on both sides the water. Perhaps he had not the lively fancy that passes for imagination with the careless, which allures and disappoints you in so many writers of the

present day. Certainly he never embellished meagre conceptions with a dazzling trope, nor used fine words to conceal poverty of sense.

He had not that practical turn for affairs which often does what neither inventive nor creative powers can accomplish. He had neither skill nor boldness to put himself at the head of a mass of men and lead them on to some one particular end. He did not know the right handle of things, the only philosophy of some that have passed for great. If the world is ruled by boldness, as some fancy, he was destined at birth to have no place in its government. He was cautious and timid both in thought and action.

It was none of these things that gave him his power. No, that came from a deeper, purer, and more enduring source. It was a *moral power* that spoke in him; which spoke *through* him. As you read his works, or listened to his words, you felt it was not his understanding that addressed you, but his whole character. There are some that speak bravely and in fine speech; yes, with deep thought, but you think of *them* when they speak. Their opinions seem their property, at least for the time. Others put themselves in the background, their thought concealing them. It seems to be no personal thing, but the voice of wisdom or piety that speaks through them, not affected by the man's private will. You say, "An angel spoke; let us obey." So was it with him. When their great orator thundered, the Athenians forgot Demosthenes in thinking of Philip and the city. In hearing a sermon of Dr. Channing, men thought of goodness, duty, religion, not of him.

His fidelity to his moral and religious convictions made him strong and great. What he said seemed to come from nothing partial and peculiar to this man, or

that man, but from what is universal, the Soul of all our souls. He would think for himself. Nothing could pervert his moral judgment; neither the eclat of greatness, neither the antiquity of an ungodly custom become a law, nor yet the respectability of sin long wonted to the world. Timid though he was, and self-distrustful to a great degree, yet when conscience spoke he heeded neither the roar of the little, nor the clamor of the great which excites that roar. He saw through the shadows and into the reality of life. Many knew more of things as they are; few men have been so true to things as they ought to be. With him, to see what is right, was to begin to move towards it, for he made no distinction between things right and things to be done. He was single-hearted in his efforts, aiming at no personal aggrandizement. He forgot himself in finding the truth. He did not ask for the consequences of right action or right thought, but took them when they came. He trusted God, as a child its father, and did not fear to be true to truth. This moral simplicity was beautiful above praise.

Again, he was eminently a pious man. Nothing was more marked in him than his piety. His "life was hid with Christ in God," to use the mystical expression of the apostle. His piety did not stare you in the face, standing in the aisles of a church, as the false pietism of the sects. It was not sanctimonious — *piety* never is — nor ascetic, and least of all desirous to be seen. It went on its way like a brook "in the leafy month of June," that takes no pains to woo your eye or ear to its musical and sparkling waters; but come when you will come, in serene weather or in cloudy days, day time or night time, it murmurs sweetly as it goes; break on it in the thicket, cross it in the meadow, it welcomes you with

the same pleasing note; flowing it sings, and singing flows. His piety gave the sweetness of its tone to his writings. All his maturer works are deeply religious. Take any one of his treatises, on War, Slavery, Education, Temperance, its religious character meets you perpetually as light in the heavens, which is all about you as a continual presence. He does not insult the reader with it, as some writers, nor ask you to admire it. But there it is to charm, not repel. It is not easy to find a writer, since the days of John the evangelist, in whom piety is so universal, so lovely, and above all so attractive. It has all the strength of Saint Augustine, without his extravagant asceticism; all the sweetness of Kempis or Hugh de St. Victor, or Behme or Law, without their dreamy mysticism and aqueous sentimentality. In this respect he was the Fénelon of the Protestants; yes, more and better than Fénelon, for his heart did not conflict with his head; and he needed not, like the good Archbishop of Cambray, degrade man to exalt God, nor forbid thinking and action, that we might feel the more. He trusted God throughout, and not only as far as he could see, for in him faith was developed as well as sense or intellect. Were there days of trouble, — as there is always thunder in the sky, and he lived through stormy times and died when there was no settled serenity, — he did not fear, but confided. He lay low in the hand of his God, and was warmed in the bosom of the Father of all. Perfect love cast out his fear. Why should it not? He felt the Spirit of Christ within him, and loved Jesus, who helped him come to God. His piety was so strong and ever flowing, that it affected his tones and his very looks. A worldly man must have felt rebuked in his presence, as by an angel. He found God everywhere: not only in the church, but wherever his footstep trod;

in the sounds of ocean, where God holds in the waters with a leash of sand; in the bloom of the crocus beside his door-step in winter; in the ribs and veins of a leaf; in the sounds of nature, so full of poetry, — the grass, the leaves, the drowsy beetles, the contented kine; in the summer wind, that came to the window at nightfall and played in the ringlets of his children's hair; in the light that mantles over the western sky, as the sun goes down; in the fires that shine there, beautiful creatures, all night long; in the star that anticipates the day, which looked gently through his window, consoling him for the loss of sleep. His piety was like an old Hebrew's in a Christian soul. He saw God always before his face. God led him in his truth, and taught him the secret of the Lord.

More than any man I have known, he had confidence in God. He saw him in the world, where they are doubly blind who cannot see him; he saw him in the history of man; yes, in man's darkest day, a great wakening light, a pillar of fire guiding us from lowness and rudeness to loveliness of life. He knew the Father of all had taken care of his own world in times past, and did not doubt he would do so in time to come, though man did not see how. He saw God in every step this side the grave; and when that opens its gates, and the soul shakes off the body, he knew the eternal light must needs roll through.

It has often been said of what is sometimes called "liberal Christianity," that it is not favorable to piety. Dr. Channing was a perpetual reproof of the uncharitable assertion. His writings made religion life, beautiful life. In most of what are called "religious books," what is set forth as Christianity appears as a very dull thing; cold, ascetic, lachrymose; it insults your manli-

ness; casts you off from sunny and fresh nature; lays a rude hand on the most blameless enjoyments, as if cheerfulness were a mistake. They may make you a monk, not a man. The practical works of the accomplished Taylor, the ascetic Baxter, even of Fénelon, Foster, and Law, make religion severe and dreadful. The writings of Dr. Channing have just the opposite effect. Religion appears in her native garb, not in the regimentals of a sect; an angel, not a nun. Life is made more than belief, and love is placed higher than grimace. It would be saying but little, to assert that Dr. Channing has done more than any of the Christian writers to make religion beautiful and winning. He saw — still more, he felt — its accordance with man's constitution, not viewing it as a thing foreign to our nature, but as the living of the life God appoints. How could it fail to be lovely?

Then, again, he loved mankind. He did not believe moral laws were beautiful in thought, but become deformed when applied to life, and therefore good for nothing when tried, and so he attempted not to amend the laws of God. He did not think piety had done its work when it said grace, or rose from prayer. Though, by the peculiar and natural bent of his mind, more meditative than philosophic, more mystical than rationalistic, he was yet the last to go astray in pietistic vagaries, and revel in the flowers of sentimental devotion, bringing back nothing to the hive that sheltered and fed him. Oh, no. His love of God did not hinder him from loving man. Did love of God ever do this? No, but the love of self often, in religion's name. His piety helped him to a good life of thought and action. His religion and reason, his love of God and love of man, walked together and did not fall out by the way. His vine

proved its planting by bearing much fruit. He loved man as man; not because he was educated, or famous, or rich, but for the immortal nature that was in him, the affections that never die, the spirit capable of unbounded growth and infinite glory. He looked deeper than the wrappage which circumstances place about mankind. He saw the man in the beggar. To him the greatest man was he who conformed most nearly to the divine image. "The greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burden cheerfully, who is calmest in storms and most fearless under menace and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering." Save only the words of Jesus in the Gospels, I know of nothing, in the whole compass of human literature, that partakes so largely of this love, as his eloquent works. How he plead for man against the tyranny of ages past, the tyranny of the present, the despotism of social institutions, the tyranny of the strong over the weak! Still, his pleading was not a "woe-unto-you," but a "Father-forgive-them." You turn from the writings of the few great men and the multitude of little men that are read amongst us, and in his page you find words which come straightway out of a heart full of love — love to all. His affection was strong and manly, not that puling sentimentalism which takes a friend by the hand in a conference-room, saying, "Oh, how I love you, my brother," and after that has no more that it can do; nor was it of that sublimated sort which loves man as an abstraction, but treads individuals, concrete men, under foot in so doing. No, it was a love of making them greater, wiser, better. Though not found in the busy walks of men, few had so many that made him

their adviser in spiritual things, and sought his sympathy in distress. He was disinterested and forgetful of himself to a degree rare among men. If he saw an error or a sin of society, he told of it. Distrustful of himself in many things, — so mild and meek that it seemed he would not break the wing of a perished fly, — when sin came before him, no fire was so scorching as his words; no man's indignation like his. He did not ask, What will my friends or my foes think of *me* for doing or saying this? but what he thought right to do and say, he did without fear. Living in a place where he said it was "difficult to draw a long breath," surrounded by men of views widely different from his own, dependent upon them in some measure, when duty called him he did not ask what they favored, what they feared, or what they would tolerate, or what they would think of him, knowing that the consequences of truth God will take care of. A man truly religious — of whom should he be afraid?

His self-discipline was not the less remarkable. His self-command, it is said, was not a natural gift, but bought with its price. In youth, we are told, he was hasty, impetuous. His controversial writings in theology, printed many years ago, do not discover the same philosophical composure and unconscious moderation that mark those of at least *one* of his early fellow-soldiers, and which distinguish his own later works. He knew the power of genius, but believed in industry none the less. His tranquillity of mind, his acquaintance with the world, — great for a man so recluse, — his clearness of insight, his skill in separating the unimportant from the essential points of any case, his accurate discriminations of character, — all these were the result of diligent cultivation, far more than of natural gifts. Had he not

cultivated the affections and religious sentiments with the same care as the intellectual and moral faculties, to produce that piety and love so conspicuous in him?

Such, then, were the sources of his influence, a fountain of healing water fed by five perennial springs; his moral fidelity, his pious heart, his love of man, his forgetfulness of self, and the careful cultivation of his gifts, — these were the secret of his eloquence and power. As a man he must have had his faults, certainly his imperfections, which some one, I trust, will relate, for of *such* a man the faults should be portrayed, as the scars of a hero.

With such sources to draw from, how could he fail to be eloquent; yes, to have what puts eloquence to shame, — the persuasive power of simple truth? All men, with hearts in their bosoms and eyes not blinded by prejudice, could see the truth when it was spoken, — a truth which carried the seal of its witness along with it. How could they do less than respect it and yield? It need not be said that such a man came gradually to the truth he taught. God rains down truth on no man, but invites all to draw at her well for themselves. There were men, good as himself, that thought differently on many points, and did as such men always do, — opposed him with a good man's weapon. It is needless to dwell on the treatment he must meet from others of a different character, and tell how the envious assailed him with venomous tooth, though only to poison themselves; how the wicked and the worldly mocked at him because he was not one of them! I need not tell how men in pews and men in pulpits lifted up their voice against him; how some "could not understand him;" how others saw only to gnash on him with their teeth. You know that such things must needs be; that the beginning thereof

is very ancient, and the end not yet. It is useless to stop in this place to tell how such things befell him and how he bore them, while he moved through the years, as to tell of the dust that annoys a traveller, or the mire that clings to his chariot wheels, or the dogs that bark at him as he approaches some village inn. These things must be, and the pilgrim leaves them behind and fares on. But it is worth while to tell that he bore this trial bravely and like a religious man. He did not give abuse for abuse, coldness for coldness. Neglect awakened no anger, insult no indignation. He gave his opponents no harsh words for their railing, no scorn, no contempt, but pitied their ignorance and continued to love. What else could a Christian wish to do? The sun shines on the unthankful and the unmerciful, though they offend God's laws each day.

Let us now consider more particularly the work to which he devoted himself. He engaged in the REFORM OF THEOLOGY, in common with many of his contemporaries. We all of us know something of the present state of theology, in what are called the more "liberal churches;" we know how slowly the voice of truth gets heard, or even spoken in theological matters. But it is better in our time than in days gone by. When Dr. Channing came to the pulpit, the gloomy doctrines of that austere theology which our fathers embraced, prevailed far more widely than now, and in a form more repulsive than the present. The common doctrine of the churches respecting the character of God, the nature of man, the terms of salvation, the future condition of the greater part of mankind, were such as to make the flesh creep with horror; doctrines which, if preached to you at this day, I trust, would drive you forth to the fields to learn your religion in the flowers and the trees.

The common theology made God a King, not a Father; Christ the master, not the brother of us all; and man a worm, a child of God's wrath, not the son of his love, made in the Father's image. These views still prevail in the greater part of the New England churches; but they are modified, softened here and there, and beside, there is amongst us a "more liberal" sect called Unitarians, who disclaim the most revolting doctrines of the old school; a sect halting, indeed, it seems, between life and death, between the liberty of the spirit and the thraldom of the letter, but still an auspicious and blessed sign of the times.

When Dr. Channing came to the pulpit, the great protest against theological tyranny had not been made. Many had abandoned in silence the more repulsive dogmas; there had been already much freedom of thought in theology; many saw that religion was one thing and our notions about it something quite different. There had been, fifty years before, a Bryant at Quincy, a Shute and a Gay at Hingham, a Brown at Cohasset; above all, perhaps, a Mayhew at Boston, one whose word and works provoked the spirit of freedom to fight the political war for Independence, and the war yet more difficult and not so soon ended, the war for freedom in theology and religion. What need to speak of others, clergymen and laymen, that shared and encouraged the work? Dr. Freeman and his church had, formally and publicly, rejected much of the "Athanasian theology," as early as 1785, and — received their reward from the church and the clergy, for the pains they took to "search the scriptures" and "hold fast what was good." A spirit of new liberality was dawning upon our churches. Some welcomed the light with loud hozannas; some received it, but said nothing; but others closed the windows,

sighing for the darkness of Egypt, and saying, "Oh Lord, we pray thee give us no more light." There were great difficulties to overcome, but there were earnest men to overcome them, brave men, godly teachers set for that work. A battle was to be fought; they did not provoke the charge, but stood each in his lot, with his loins girded and his weapon bright. It is needless to repeat their names. The time has not come to speak worthily of them. Some of their number still linger on the earth, while the greater part have gone where they can be learned without books, wise without study, and free without fighting always for their life. Honor to those men who first broke through the darkness and dared to think. They stood together like men; they fought like brave men, long and well. They saw not all things, but they did not tell of what they never saw. They put confidence in man, and trusted God.

Among this band of theological reformers, Dr. Channing stood conspicuous. But he was never in the foremost rank of the movement; not a discoverer, but defender. Read his writings, from the first controversial letter, or the ordination sermon in Salem, 1815, to the sermon at Philadelphia, twenty-six years later, and you see how gradual was his progress when measured by the rapid strides of some of his brethren. He parted reluctantly with many old doctrines which had little of reason or Scripture to support them. He was slow in examination, suspicious of new things, cautious in his statements, feeling the ground before him as he trod; but not Monadnock stands firmer on its base, than he stood on his convictions, when once established.

In our day, there is a talk about "liberal Christianity," and the term has a meaning; for what is popularly called Christianity was never liberal, since the early

age. God grant it may be. Dr. Channing has done much to show that Christianity is not necessarily connected with a foul system of doctrines; much to lead men to a sound theology, which rests on the facts of the case; more, perhaps, than any other has done *directly* to liberalize theology in all the sects. In this work, however, he was not called on, as Paul in his first trial, to stand alone. He was never, in his earlier years, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness;" there was never a time when "all forsook him and fled." No, there were men, older and younger than himself, engaged in that war, — a Bentley, a Kirkland, a Bancroft, a Worcester, whom the Lord has taken; a Ware, who reposes in peaceful age after his honorable and noble toil; a Norton, whose talents, learning, dialectic skill, were devoted to the defence of freedom, whose ponderous mace has done such service for truth. I need not mention others, men perhaps valiant as these, certainly as true. Conspicuous among these men stood Dr. Channing.

This battle was fought as other theological battles; there were hard words on both sides; a great many hard words on one side. The war they began is not yet over, the principles which lay concealed, it may be, at the bottom of all are not yet carried out. How the old questions of theology are *now* met, it is not needful to say, nor to waste time in describing how the broad banner, once borne in the van, on which great men had emblazoned the motto, MAN'S FREEDOM AND GOD'S TRUTH, is now draggled in the dust. Let this subject pass for some other time. But this must be said of Dr. Channing, that if he was slow in coming to the principles and the method of a liberal theology, he never forsook them, but went farther than his former friends

to some conclusions logically unavoidable, but now vehemently denied. He did not—certainly not in his later years—quarrel with a theology, because its circle was wider than his own. It is not saying too much to declare, that no one of our century, in England or America, has done so much as he to set forth the greatness of man's nature, the loveliness of Jesus, and the goodness of God. In this respect he is the father of us all. What a welcome did a "great truth" meet from him; what a cordial hand did he extend to every earnest soul struggling through the darkness and calling for aid! He did not fear inquiry, for he knew Truth not only takes care of herself but of us. He did not trust God for nothing; his trust made him fearless and strong. He did not see all the truth that will be seen in the next century. He did what was better, he helped men to see somewhat of truth in this, and blessed all that aided others to see. Preachers in their pulpit, and solitary scholars in their closet, felt stronger for his sympathy with freedom and truth. We may well say, "The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," for a greater than Elijah has gone up to the sky. He was taken at a time when needed most. But God governs the world wisely, and will see to the affairs of truth; for, as the proverb says, "When men are silent, stones speak."

Dr. Channing's view of Christianity was eminently beautiful. With him it was the religion of love. It showed him God as a Father, watching over his children, and correcting them for their good; presiding in all the affairs of the world, and overruling accidents, seemingly the most untoward, for the good of all. He saw him rebuking the sin, encouraging the goodness, answering the prayers, and blessing the heart of all men. He felt safe in God's world. He saw in Jesus, the archetype

of man, the religious and moral ideal to which all should aspire. He looked on Christianity as destined to a vast work that shall never end. Were it to do no more than it had done, it were a failure. It was to civilize the world; to make the strong the guardians, not tyrants, of the weak; to annihilate war; to make earth a better place, and man more fit to live on it. It was to educate men, developing all the powers of mankind, physical, intellectual, affectional, moral, religious. Christianity was a means divinely appointed for this great end. In it was the explanation of the world's early history, the promise of its future glory.

He turned his attention also to another branch of the great work in the salvation of man, — to the REFORM OF SOCIETY. Here his courage and influence were greater than in the theological reform. Here he was more alone. True, he had his friends who went with him, and before him, to this work, but not men of the same stamp as in the earlier reform. Some differed from him conscientiously, and stood back; some were taking their ease in their inn; some were busy about particular concerns of man, — the fishing, the manufacturing, the shipping interest, — but forgot, it seems, the great interest of man, to be cared for, not by neglecting the parts, indeed, but by attending to the whole.

In the early part of his ministry, without neglecting more practical subjects, Dr. Channing spoke often and eloquently of the principles of religion and virtue, the greatness of man, the goodness of God, the eternity of truth, the beauty of self-denial, the necessity of conforming to the law of God. When men heard this, many were moved by his eloquent truth, but some said: "This is very beautiful; it may be very true, but it is very high; too high for this world, we are certain; too

low for the next, we are afraid. He talks to angels, and not men. He talks of truth and justice as if they were not abstractions. We cannot understand him." In later years he applied these doctrines to life. The greatness of human nature was his favorite theme. But he saw man degraded, insensible alike of his duties and his rights. He preached the duties and the truths belonging to this subject.

He saw the vice of INTEMPERANCE belittling the faculties and impoverishing the resources of man. He lifted his voice against the sin; and of all that has been written on this fertile theme, perhaps nothing is more just and wise than his Temperance Address. It has counsel not to be neglected at the present day.

He turned also to the great subject of EDUCATION. He saw its value, and felt the necessity of a work very different from what is commonly conceived of. Had man great powers of mind, affection, soul? They must be developed by careful cultivation. He demanded an education, for all men, far in advance of what many deem sufficient, or even possible. He thought that the resources and talent of the country could not be better employed than in building up a nobler population, better men and women, able to understand the world, and fit to live in it. It was no one-sided culture, but the perfection of all the faculties, that he demanded.

He turned his attention to one other theme, the subject of SLAVERY, "which makes us the by-word and scorn of the nations." I know it is a tender subject; one which many think must not be touched upon with us, "who have no concern" — so it is said — "in the matter." Against this national crime, this hideous sin of a free people, whose motto is, "All are born free;" a Christian people, whose religion says, "Love your

brother," — against this sin he uplifted his voice with more than even his usual eloquence and persuasive power, but not without his customary charity and moderation. No subject, of late years, engrossed so much of his attention as this. None of his writings, I may safely say, does so much honor to his head and heart as on this theme. I know there are men, good and wise men, who scruple not to condemn his course; others, who think slavery is a "very clever thing to all parties;" for the slave is fed and clothed, lives, not among savage blacks, but Christian whites, and the master can get more sugar or cotton with slaves than without them! I know there are "good and wise men" who would not have any one cry out for the wrongs of two or three millions of souls held in the foulest bondage, because, to their owners, these souls are worth some twelve hundred millions of dollars, and the dollars must be kept, though the souls be lost. I know there are men, "Christian men," as the world uses that term, who think the righting of wrongs belongs to anybody but themselves. Dr. Channing was not of this number. His mind was early turned to this sin, and his zeal against it never abated. On this ground also he had his predecessors, men whose self-denying zeal is so well known that their names need not be spoken here. In the warfare against slavery, he encountered the abuse, — that is the true word for the treatment he met, — the abuse of both parties. The one condemned him for meddling with the matter at all, and could "never forgive his speaking about slavery; that must be left to the slave-holders;" the other condemned him for not going the same length, or in the same way, with themselves. But did it never happen, in times of excitement, that he who was condemned by the extremes of both

parties was not very far from the right? His opposition to this national sin brought on him more obloquy than all his theological heresies, early and late. His tracts on slavery have been widely read, and perhaps have had more influence than any other contemporary works in turning the attention of wise and serious men to this crime; perhaps more than all others. Here, too, he was not alone; others went with him to the work, and got honorable scars. Above all others in his esteem, there was one, united to him in the closest ties of friendship, sharing his aspirations and his sympathies. Shoulder to shoulder they went to this work, each encouraging the other; the same spirit seemed in them both, and they took sweet counsel together. In the inscrutable wisdom of Him, without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, that one was torn from us, leaving us, indeed, tears for his departure, but joy, also, for his life. Honor to him, honor to both. Yes, honor to all who dare lift up their voice for freedom, and for man. The tyranny of opinion is the most stifling of all tyranny; but to true men like these, it was neither let nor bar.

He aimed to *improve society* in its general principles and entire framework. He saw that we live in a state unchristian and not rational; that wars prevail, and must be prepared for; that we prevent crime by remedies almost as bad as the disease; that laws do not reach all offenders, perhaps not the most heinous; that the goods of society do not always fall into the hands of their primitive owners; that some men are losers by what we call civilization; that laws and institutions do not always make us more free, but weave webs of conventionalism about us, belittling the might of man. He saw that the strong use the weak as their tools, and do

not bear the burdens of the weak, as reason and religion demand. He saw, too, the increasing power of covetousness, which is corrupting the whole people, individuals, legislatures, yes, the nation; a spirit that may make the rich richer, but certainly the poor poorer; which drives the laboring man each year farther from honorable competency. Against all these he lifted up his voice, thinking we were never a rational nor a Christian people till we applied reason and religion to all our daily life. To dwell a moment on a single point: he loved *freedom*, the largest liberty of the sons of God. He asked this for himself, for all men, — the liberty to feel right, think right, do right. He was jealous of associations, and preferred the monarchy of individual freedom to the democracy of a public opinion forcing man to extremes. He found no guillotine nor fagots awaiting him, it is true, but he did find a tyranny of opinion destructive to all real freedom. I cannot forbear to quote some of his own words on this subject, they are so full of wisdom and instruction at this day: "Shall I say a word of evil of this good city of Boston? Among all its virtues it does not abound in a tolerant spirit. The yoke of opinion is a heavy one, often crushing individuality of judgment and action. No city in the world is governed so little by a police, and so much by mutual inspection, and what is called public sentiment. . . . Opinion is less individual, or runs more into masses, and often rules with a rod of iron. Undoubtedly opinion, when enlightened, lofty, pure, is a useful sovereign; but in the present imperfect state of society it has its evils as well as benefits. It suppresses the grosser vices, rather than favors the higher virtues. It favors public order, rather than originality of thought, moral energy, and spiritual life. To prescribe its due

bounds is a very difficult problem; were its restraints wholly removed, the decorum of the pulpit would be endangered; but that these restraints are excessive in this city, and especially in our denomination, that they often weigh oppressively on the young minister, and that they often take from ministers of all ages the courage, confidence, and authority which their high mission should inspire, cannot, I fear, be denied. The minister, here, on entering a pulpit, too often feels that he is to be judged rather than to judge; that instead of meeting sinful men who are to be warned or saved, he is to meet critics to be propitiated or disarmed. . . . Formerly Felix trembled before Paul; now the successors of Paul more frequently tremble."

I need not pause to tell how his words on these great topics were met, nor what echo they brought back. If a prophet be not stoned he is generally a prophet of smooth things. "Blessed," said One whose voice still rings in the ears of the world,—"blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake . . . for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Now that he is dead, men that made wide the mouth, and drew out the tongue at his zeal, his piety, his hope, his confidence in man and God, may build his tomb, and sing psalms to his praise.

But time fails me; not so the theme. Let us make an end of words. Here dies one before whom nothing was sacred but truth. No lie found shelter with him. No fear affrighted him. He aimed to come up to the measure of a Christian man; he went forward in that work. He was a rare instance of a social reformer in the pulpit; a preacher that denounced the sins of his time. He did not preach about the Hebrew bondsmen

and their sufferings eighteen centuries before Christ, but of American bondsmen and their sufferings eighteen centuries after Christ. He did not expose the idolatry and the sin of Babylon, but of Boston. He carried you to Nazareth, Gethsemane, Calvary. For what end? To give you the spirit of Jesus, to do and live now as he lived then, that you might be a Christian, as he the Christ. A catholic man, he did not deem it necessary to be a bigot before he was a Christian. He saw a religion deeper than the superficial notions of a theological coterie.

> "To sect or party his large soul
> Disdained to be confined:
> The good he loved of every name,
> And prayed *with* all mankind."

Educated in the grim theology of Dr. Hopkins, he slowly laid aside the prepossessions of his youth; but he never returned to an idol once forsaken. Each year brought him new wisdom and greater power of speech. He was a rare example of a man after half a century of life, growing yearly more eloquent. The cause is plain. The eloquence that comes of tropes, and figures, and brilliant thought, may fade with the fading sense; but the eloquence that comes of a moral purpose, of a religious trust, deepens with that zeal, and grows brighter as that faith rises higher and more high. How could he fail to become more persuasive, when his heart yearned more and more towards the children of men?

Each season the flowers and the stars had a new beauty in his eyes. Nature and man grew yearly in his esteem. He has gone from us; in the midst of his usefulness was he taken away, his eye not dim nor his natural vigor abated. He has gone, and we are left.

To mourn at his loss? It cannot be otherwise. We must weep. The slave has lost that voice which pleaded so eloquently for him. The poorest boy amid the Berkshire hills is the poorer for his death. The babe born in a garret of yonder city is left more friendless than before. The mourner has one less to wipe her tears away. The selfish and wicked will hear no more his pathetic rebuke, so often slighted. The wise man has lost a counsellor; the humblest a friend. Who is there to right the wrongs of the oppressed? He who has taken his servant where sorrow and sighing cannot enter. Shall we lament over the glory that has gone? No, let us take courage, and rejoice that so much goodness has been lived out in our times, in the midst of us. When I compare him with the gifted men of England, whose mortal lids death has closed within not many years, — with Scott, Coleridge, Byron, Mackintosh, Bentham, Stewart, Brown, — I cannot but say his influence is deeper and far more elevating than theirs. But I must end.

In the circumstances of his departure there was something exceedingly pleasant to remember. He had spent the summer in the valley of the Housatonic, among the Berkshire mountains; his "soul went forth amid the vast works of God." It had been the pleasantest period of his life. He was meditating a great work which he leaves not done. On the first of August he had delivered an address on the emancipation of eight hundred thousand fellow-men in the West Indies, — a work not inferior to his best productions. He was returning to his home. Amid the lovely scenery of Vermont he sickened and lay. His family were about him. His senses continued to the last. It was a clear and balmy autumn day, — the Sabbath; the day of his greatest labors, when he had spoken to so many hearts; the day hallowed to all

our minds by lovely and long-cherished associations. The sun went towards the horizon; the slanting beams fell into the chamber. He turned his face towards that sinking orb, and he and the sun went away together. Each, as the other, left "the smile of his departure" spread on all around: the sun on the clouds; he on the heart.

For himself, a good man cannot die poorly; nor a Christian immature. There is something lovely and soothing in all this. He leaves not his written thoughts unfinished, perishing, to the world's loss. He was not cut off just thrusting his sickle into a field none else could reap. He was spared the daily decline of age, and has gone with powers mature, but not faded; happy not only in the prolonged usefulness of his life, but in the opportunity of death.

> "The joys of age had crowned him,
> And when he breathed his life away,
> The arms of friends were round him."

His words will not perish; the spirit of the prophet not only goes to the realm it saw in vision, but reads still its lessons here. As the sun, while it shines, shows us the earth, but hides the stars, so is the presence of a great soul. When he is gone, the deeper and higher lights of his character come out, to shine in their lovely radiance, while his orb rolls on in never-ending light.

The cares of the world will trouble him no more. He enjoys the rest he contemplated. His faith is changed to open vision. He enters the joy of his Lord. The word of his mouth — we shall hear it no more forever; but his lesson remains for you and me, — his moral truth, his piety, his love, his divine life; a rare union of rare qualities! Who does not feel the stronger and better

that he has lived, so great and good? We shall all join in the last words of his public address: "Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth, and 'it cannot return to him void.' A new communion of the Christian spirit, a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood and of all men's relation to the common Father, — this is among the signs of our times; we see it; do we not feel it? Before this all oppressions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this divine energy. The song of angels, 'On earth peace,' will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to heaven! Come, ye predicted age of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned! Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble striving of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son through the whole earth!"

BEAUTY IN THE WORLD OF MATTER.

All things are double, and he hath made nothing imperfect. — Ecclesiasticus xlii. 24.

LATE at night of a Saturday the milliner's girl shuts up the close-pent shop, and, through such darkness as the city allows, walks to her home in the narrow street. All day long, and all the week, she has been busy with bonnets and caps, crowns and fronts, capes and lace and ribbons; with gauze, muslin, tape, wire, bows, and artificial flowers; with fits and misfits, bearings and unbearings, fixings and unfixings, tryings-on and takings-off; with looking in the glass at "nods, becks, and wreathed smiles," — till now the poor girl's head swims with the heat of the day and the bad air of the shop, and her heart aches with weary loneliness. Now, thankful for the coming Sunday, she sits down in her little back chamber, opens the blinds, and looks out at the western sky, taking a long breath. Over her head what a spectacle! In the western horizon there yet linger some streaks of day; a pale red hue, toned up with a little saffron-colored light, lies over Brighton and Cambridge and Watertown, — a reflection it seems from the great sea of day which tosses there far below the horizon, where the people are yet at their work; for with them it is still the hot, bustling Saturday afternoon, and the welcome night has not yet reached them, putting her children to bed with her cradle hymn, —

"Hush, my child, lie still and slumber;
Holy angels guard thy bed;
Heavenly blessings without number
Hover o'er thy infant head!"

One lamp of heavenly light pours its divine beauty into the room. What a handsome thing it is, that evening star! No wonder men used to worship it as a goddess, at once queen of beauty and of love, thinking while unkindly ice tipped the sphere and bounded the Arctic and Antarctic realm, that she ruled into one those two temperate zones of an ideal world, and even the tropic belt between the two. Well, God forgive the poor heathens! they might have worshipped something meaner than that "bright particular star," full of such significance; many a Christian has gone further and done worse, whom may God also pity and bless! If Kathie's eyes were bright enough, she could see that this interior star has now the shape of the new moon, and is getting fuller every night. But what a blessed influence both of beauty and of love it pours into that little hired chamber! Then all about the heavens there is such wealth of stars of all sizes, all colors, — steel-gray, sapphire, emerald, ruby, white, yellow, — each one "a beauty and a mystery!"

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star [quoth she],
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!"

What a sight it is! yet God charges nothing for the spectacle; the eye is the only ticket of admission; commonly it is also a season-ticket given for a lifetime, only now and then it is lost, and the darkened soul looks out no more, but only listens for those other stars, which

also rise and set in the audible deep, — for the ear likewise has its celestial hemisphere and kingdom of heaven. But those stars the poor maiden looks at belong to nobody; the heavens are God's guest-chamber; he lets in all that will.

Our maiden knows a few of the chief lights, — great, hot Sirius, the three in Orion's belt, the North-star, the Pointers, and some of those others "which outwatch the Bear," and never set.

Well, poor tired girl, here is one thing to be had without money. God's costliest stars to you come cheap as wishing! All night long this beauty broods over the sleeping town, — a hanging garden, not Babylonian, but heavenly, whereof the roses are eternal, and thornless also. How large and beautiful they seem as you stand in dismal lanes and your eyes do not fail of looking upwards; full of womanly reproach as you look at them from amid the riot and uproar and debauchery of wicked men. Yet they cost nothing — everybody's stars. The dew of their influence comes upon her, noiseless and soft and imperceptible, and lulls her wearied limbs.

> "Oh sleep! it is a blessed thing,
> Beloved from pole to pole!
> To Mother God the praise be given!
> She sent the blessed sleep from heaven
> Which slid into her soul."

At one touch of this wonder-working hand the maiden's brain triumphs over her mere muscles, her mind over the tired flesh; the material sky is transfigured into the spiritual heaven, and the bud of beauty opens into the flower of love. Now she walks, dreamy, in the kingdom of God. What a world of tropic luxuriance springs up around her! — fairer than artists paint; her young

"imagination bodies forth the forms of things unseen," nor needs a poet's pen to give those "airy nothings a local habitation and a name." No garden of Eden did poet ever describe so fair, for God "giveth to his beloved even in their sleep," —more than most wakeful artists can reconstruct when "the meddling intellect misshapes the forms of things." What a kingdom of heaven she walks in, — the poor tired maiden from the shop now become the new Eve in this paradise of dreams! But forms of earth still tenant there. It is still the daily life, but now all glorified; sleep and love are the Moses and Elias who work this real and not miraculous transfiguration. The little close-pent shop is a cathedral now, vaster than St. Peter's, richer too than all Genoese marbles in its varicolored decoration; the furniture and merchandise are transubstantiated to arches, columns, statues, pictures. Ribbons stretch into fair galleries from pillar to pillar, lighter and more graceful than Cologne or Strasburg can boast in their architectural romance, writ in poetic stone, and the poor tape of the shop is now a stairway climbing round a column of the transept and winding into the dome far out of sight, till the mind, outrunning that other disciple, the eye, takes wing to follow its aërial ramp, which ends only in the lights of day, streaming in at the top and coloring the walls, storied all over with the pictured glory of heavenly scenes. The counter has become the choir and chancel; the desk is the great high altar. The roar of the street — where market-wagons, drays, omnibuses, coaches, carts, gigs, mix in one continuous uproar from morn till eve — is now subdued into music, sweeter and sublimer too than the Pope ever heard in his Sistine chapel, nay, though he were composed for by Beethoven and Mozart, and sung to and aided by all the great masters of heroic song, from old

Timotheus, who "raised a mortal to the skies," to St. Cecilia, who "drew an angel down." What manly and womanly voices sing forth the psalm of everlasting life, while the spheral melody of heaven is the organ-chant which they all follow! A visionary lover comes forth, — his form a manly fact, seen daily from the window of her shop, his love a maidenly dream of many a natural and waking hour. He comes from the high altar; it is the Desire of all nations, the Saviour himself, the second Adam, the king of glory. He leads her through this church of love, built of sleep and beauty, takes her within the veil to the holy of holies, where dwells the Eternal; therein, that which is in part is done away, and the mortal maid and immortal lover are made one forever and ever.

Sleep on, O maiden! and take thy rest till the morning star usurp the evening's place; nay, till the sexton toll his bell for Sunday prayers! I will not wake thee forth from such a dream; but thank the dear God who watches over those who rise early and sit up late, who giveth to his beloved even in their sleep.

Late on the same Saturday night, Jeremiah Welltodo, senior partner of the firm of Welltodo & Co., a wealthy grocer, now waxing a little old, shuts up his ledger and puts it in the great iron safe of his counting-room. He is tired with the week's work; yet it is not quite done. The rest of the servants of the shop have long since retired to their several homes. He closes the street door — the shutters were let down long ago — and walks towards home. The street is mainly still, save the rumble of a belated omnibus creeping along, and a tired hackman takes off his last fare: for it is late Saturday night; nay, it is almost Sunday morning now, — the two twilights come near each other at this season, —

and the red which the young milliner saw has faded out before the deep, dark blue of midnight; the clouds which held up the handsome colors for her to look at have fallen now, and are dropped on meadows newly mown. How they will jewel the grass there to-morrow morning!

Mr. Welltodo's work is not quite done; business pursues him still. "Sugars are rising," quoth he, "and my stock is getting light. Flour is falling; the new harvest is coming in pretty heavy, opens rich. What a great flour country the West is. Well, I'll think of that to-morrow. Dr. Banbaby won't interrupt me much, except with the hymns. I do like music. How it touches the heart! That will do for devotion. I wish the Doctor didn't make such theological prayers, fit only for the assembly of divines at Westminster, who are dead and gone, thank God! I wish some of their works had followed them long ago. Well, in sermon time I can think of the flour and the sugar. Good night, Mr. Business. No more talk with you till to-morrow at eleven o'clock.

"What a lucky dog Jacob is, that partner of mine! Smart fellow, too! went up to Charlemont at four o'clock, on the Fitchburg railroad — bad stock that! — to see his mother. That won't be the first one he stops to see; somebody else waiting for him, — not quite so old. Mother not first this time. Well, I suppose it is all right; I used to do just so. Did not forget poor dear old mother; only thought of somebody else then; just at that time thought of dear little Jeannie; so I did, couldn't help it. Mother said nothing about it; she knew; always will be so; always was; one generation goeth away, and another generation cometh, but love remaineth forever. Well, sugar's rising, flour getting low — think of that to-morrow. How my business chases me!"

But the wind from the country hills comes into town, its arms full of the scents of many a clover-field, where the haymaker with his scythe has just swept up those crumbs which fall from God's table, and stored them as oxen's bread for next winter; but the wind gleans after him, and in advance brings to town the breath of the new-mown hay. It fans his hot temples, shaking his hair, now getting gray a little prematurely, and to his experienced memory it tells all the story of summer, and how the farmer is getting on. "What a strange thing the wind is," said he, — "seventy-five per cent nitrogen, twenty-four per cent oxygen, and one per cent aqueous vapor, flavored with carbonic acid! What a strange horse to run so swift, long-backed it is too, carrying so many sounds and odors! What a handsome thing the wind is — to the mind I mean. Look there, how it tosses the boughs of this elm tree, and makes the gas-light flicker as it passes by! See there how gracefully these long, pendulous limbs sway to and fro in the night! How it patters in the leaves of that great elm-tree up at the old place!"

He lifts his hat, half to enjoy the coolness, half also in reverence for the dear God whose wind it is which brings the country in to him, and he fares homeward. All the children are a-bed, and as Jane Welltodo, thriftiest of kind mothers, has taken the "last stitch in time," on the last garment of little Chubby Cheeks, — whose blue eyes were all covered up with handsome sleep when she looked at him two hours ago, — the good woman lifts her spectacles, and wonders why father does not come home. "Business! business! it makes me half a widow! it will kill the good man. His hair is gray now, at fifty-five; it is not age, only business. 'Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt.' Killing himself with business!

but he 's a good soul, sends home all the young folks; lets Mr. Haskell go off courting, 'to see his mother,' I think he calls it."

Just then the pass-key rattled in the door, the bolt was shot into its place, and Mr. Welltodo ran into his parlor. "To-morrow," cries he, "let us go out to the old place. You and I will ride in the chaise, and take Bobbie. Edward can go in the carryall, and take Matilda Jane and the rest of the family. He will like to deliver his piece to the trees before he speaks it on commencement-day. College wears on Edward; studies too hard. Let him run out to grass a little up at Gove's Corner; 't will do him good. I want a little smell of the country; so you do. How red your eyes are! 'T will do us all good."

So they agree, and both think of the mothers that bore them, and of their own early days in the little country town, — poor days, and yet how rich! They remember the little school-house and the mill, the meeting-house and the singing-school they went to once, when music was not the most important business they attended to. Going separate, and coming home together, — first two, next one, and finally many, in this wonderful human arithmetic!

The next morning before the first bell rung, they were at the old place where his father lived once, and his brother now; her father lives yet the other side of the hill, near the meeting-house. They will go there in the afternoon.

What green beauty there is all around. How handsome is the white clover which the city horse greedily fills his mouth withal, as Mr. Welltodo and brother 'Zekiel lead the good-natured creature to the barn! The grocer follows the example, and has a head of clover in

his mouth also, — sweeter than the cloves he put there yesterday. How delicate the leaf is; how nicely framed together! No city jeweller unites metals with such nice economy of material, or fits them with such accuracy of joint. What well-finished tracery on the leaf! Nay, the honey-bee who has been feeding thereon flies off in a graceful curve, and on wings of what beauty! How handsome the old elm-tree is; how lovely the outline of its great round top! "That tree would weigh forty tons," says Mr. Welltodo, "89,600 pounds; yet it seems to weigh nothing at all. There! that robin flies right through it as if it were but a green cloud. How attractive the color; such a repose for the eye! Dear little bits o' babie is never cradled so soft as my eye reposes on that mass of green. But how pleasantly the color of the ash-gray bark contrasts with the grass beneath, the boughs above! Look there, how handsomely the great branches part off from the trunk, and then divide into smaller limbs, then into boughs, into twigs and spray! How the pendulous limbs hang down, and swing in the wind, trailing clouds of greenness close to the ground! Look at the leaves, how well made they are! There is cabinet work for you! What joining! How well the colors match! See where the fire-hang-bird has built a nest in one of those pendulous twigs, — just as it used to be fifty years ago! Dr. Smith's squirrels will never reach that! What a pretty piece of civil or military engineering it was to put such a dainty nest in such a well-fortified place! How curiously it is made too! Such a nice covering! But here is the father; the mother is in the nest, brooding the little ones, — rather late though. Did not marry early, I suppose; could not get ready!

'To choose securely choose in May,
The leaves in autumn fall away.'

This is good counsel to bird or man, I suppose. That is right, old fellow! go and carry your wife her breakfast, — or dinner, I suppose it is. But what a blaze of beauty he is, newly kindled there in the boughs! — a piece of a rainbow, or a bit of the morning, which got entangled in the tree and torn off. How he sings! — Grisi does not touch that; no, nor Swedish Jenny Lind, with all the bobolinks of New England in her Swedish throat, as I used to think. Not up to that, not she! Then, too, the very caterpillar he has just caught and now let fall at my feet, — what a handsome thing that is! What eyes; what stripes of black on his sides, and spots of crimson on his back; what horns tipped with fire on his head! What a rich God it must be who can afford to dress a worm in such magnificence, — a Joseph's coat for a caterpillar! But next summer he will have a yet fairer coat, as he comes out of his minority with his new freedom suit on, and will flutter by all the flowers, himself an animate flower with wings. Butterflies are only masculine flowers, which have fallen in love, and so fly wooing to their quiet feminine mates. Let him go! I am glad the Oriole did not dine on such a meal as that. What a glutton, to eat up a Solomon's song of loveliness! which was not only a canticle but a prophecy likewise — of Messianic beauty for next year.

"There is a hornets' nest, — a young hornets' nest. I used to be afraid of hornets; now I will let you alone, Mr. Stingabee! Look there! city joiners and masons don't build so well in Boston as this country carpenter, who is hod-carrier, architect, and mason, and puts up his summer-house of *papier maché* under the great limb of the elm. There is a piece of conscientious work! done by the job too, — so he works Sundays, — but done faithfully. What an overseer the good God is! But no,

Mr. Hornet, your little striped head did n't plan that house, — not an artist, only a tool in another hand!"

In the mill-pond close at hand he sees the water-lilies are all out. How handsomely they lie there, withdrawing the green coverlets lined with white, and turned up with pink, wherein they wrapped themselves up yesterday at noon! What a power of white and saffron color within their cups! How they breathe their breath into his face, as if he and they were little children! and are they not of the same Father, who cradles the lily and the man with equal love? The arrowhead and the pickerel-weed blossom there, and tall flags grow out of the soft ground, with cardinals redder than Roman Lambruschini. The button-ball is in its glory, swarmed about with little insects, promoting the marriage of the flowers. The swamp honey-suckle has put on its white raiment also, as if to welcome the world, and stands there a candidate for all honors. How handsome is this vegetable tribe who live about the pond! Nay, under his feet is the little pale-blue forget-me-not. Once he used of a Sunday to fold it up in a letter signed *I know you never will*, and send it to the dear little maiden, now mother of his tall boys and comely girls. She liked the letter all the more because it contained the handwriting of her lover and her God, — a two in one without mystery. She has the letter now, laid away somewhere, and her granddaughter years hence will come upon it and understand nothing. Like Eliot's Indian Bible, nobody can read it now. No; there must be a resurrection of the spirit to read what the spirit wrote, — in Bible leaves, in flower leaves. There is the cymbidium he used to send on the same errand, saying, "God meant it for my Arethusa."

Hard by is the kitchen garden; the pumpkin-vine, disdaining narrow limits, has climbed over the wall, and

puts forth its great yellow flowers. In one of them is a huge bee tumbling about; he does not know it is Sunday, does not hear the bell now tolling its last jow for meeting; does not care what the selectmen are talking of outside the meeting-house, while within the old ladies are fanning themselves, or eating green caraway-seeds, or opening their smelling-bottles, in the great square pews, where on high seats are perched the little uncomfortable children, whose legs do not touch the floor; he cares nothing for all that, nor whether the minister finds a whole new Bible, or an old half Bible; he is buzzing and humming and fussing about in the blossom, powdered all over with the flower-dust; now he flies off to another, marrying the diœcious blossoms,—the thoughtless priest of nature that he is, who does manifold work while seeking honey for his subterranean hive. Our grocer knows him well. "What a well-built creature that is," quoth he; "how well-burnished is his coat of mail; how nicely it fits; how delicate are those strong wings of his! Sebastopol is not so well armed for offence and defence. What an apparatus for suction! The steam fire-engine rusting out in the city stables is not so well contrived for that, though it did cost the city ten thousand dollars and that famous visit to Cincinnati. But why all this wealth of beauty? Is not use enough, or is God so rich that he can dress up an humble-bee in such fine clothes? so benevolent that he will not be content with doing less?"

On the other side, the pasture comes close down to the pond; some of the cows stand there in the water, protecting their limbs from the flies; others lie ruminant in the shadow of an oak-tree. Wild roses come close down to the lilies, and these distant relatives, but near neighbors and good friends, meet in the water,—

the one looking down and reflected, where the other lies low and looks up. Spiræas and sweetbriers are about the wall, where also the raspberries are now getting ripe; andromedas shake their little white bells, all musical with loveliness; the elder-bush is also in blossom, its white flowers grateful to the eye, as to the manifold insects living and loving in its hospitable breast. How clean is the trunk of the basswood; how large and handsome its leaves; how full it is of flowers!—to which the bees,

> "with musical delight,
> For their sweet gold repair."

A little further off, the chestnut trees, also in their late bloom, dot the woods with unexpected beauty,—looking afar off like white roses sprinkled in the grass. How well their great round tops contrast with the tall pines further up on the hill! The grouping of plants is admirable as the several beauty of each. Nature never combines the inappropriate, nor makes a vulgar match. There are no misalliances in that wedlock. How lovely is the shadow of the oak, as it lies there, half on land, half in the water! The swallow stoops on the wing, dips her bill, and then flies off to her populous nest in the rafters of the barn; how curiously she clings there, braced by her stiff tail, and wakes up the little ones to fill their mouths! and then comes such twittering as reminds the city horse of his own colthood in the far-off pastures of Vermont.

"Ah me," says the grocer, "what a world of use here is! see the ground, how rich the clover is! time it was cut too,—running into the ground every day. How the corn comes out! earth full of moisture, air full of heat, country never looked finer! How the Indian corn, that Mississippi of grain, rolls out that long stream of green

leaves; it will tassel this very week! What a fine water-power the pond is! — only ten foot fall, and yet it is stronger than all the king's oxen; turns 'Zekiel's mill just as it used to father's, sawing in winter and spring, and grinding all the year through; now it does more yet, for he has put the water to 'prentice, and taught it many a trade. How big the trees are! that great pasture white-oak, twenty feet in circumference, — Captain McKay would give two hundred dollars for it, take it where it stands, here; it has only one leg to stand on, but so many knees! That hill-side where the cows are, what admirable pasture it is, early and late! see the white clover — a little lime brought that out! what a growth of timber further up! What a useful world it is! what a deal of engineering it took to put it together! only to *run* such a world after it was set up must take an infinite Providence. It is a continual creation, as I told Dr. Banbaby; but he could not understand it, for 'it was not in the Bible,' no part of revelation; '*continued creation* is a contradiction in the adjective;' — well, well, it is an agreement in the substantive, a fact of nature if not a word of theology. What a useful world! But what a power of beauty there is too! How handsome the clover is! — Miss Moolly Cow, you don't care anything about that; it is grass to you, to the bee it is honey; it is loveliness also to my eyes. The Indian corn — a Mississippi of use is it? Why it is the loveliest Amazon that ever ran in all this green world of grains! That mill-pond grinds use for brother 'Zekiel all day long, makes him a rich man. But what beauty runs over the dam, year out, year in, and comes dripping down from those mosses, on the stones: how much more of it lies there in the pond to feed the lilies, handsome babies on that handsome breast, — and serve as looking-glasses for

the clouds all day, the stars all night! This makes all the neighbors rich, if they will only hold up their dish when it rains wealth of handsomeness. Beauty is all grist, — no toll taken out for grinding that. Mill-pond is useful and beautiful at the same time, a servant and a sister. How that little cat's paw of wind rumples its dress, and those

'Little breezes dusk and shiver,'

just as Matilda Jane read it to me in Tennyson last Sunday afternoon, when her mother was hearing Banbaby preach on the 'Fall of man.' What an eye that Tennyson has! — he sees the fact; daguerreotypes it into words. If I were a poet, I would sit right down before nature and paint her just as she is; that is the way Tennyson does. So did Shakespeare, — did not put nature's hair into papers; liked the original curl; so do I; so does God. There, it is all gone now, just as still as before! I used to fish here, — but I only caught the outline of the hills, and the shadows of the trees. How those great round clouds come and look down there, and see their own face! What! don't you like it, that you must change it so fast? Well, you keep your beauty, if you do change your shape. What sunny colors! It is Sunday all the time to the clouds and the pond. How all the hills are reflected in it! and see the linden tree, and the great oak, and the white-faced cow, the house, the wall and the sweetbriers on it, and underneath all are the clouds! so the last is made first, and the first last. Mr. Church, who painted that Andes picture at the Athenæum, could not come up to this, — not he; no, not if he had Titian to help him! Look at the reflection of that great oak-tree! Worth two hundred dollars for use, is it? Captain McKay sha'n't have it; no, not for a thousand

dollars! No, no, dear old tree! Grandfather who was shot at Lexington used to tell grandmother, and she told everybody of it, that it was a large, full-grown tree when his great-great-grandfather built the first log-house in town. Underneath that he first took his pack off his shoulders, and his hat from his head, and stood up straight, and offered his prayer of thanksgiving to God. 'Ebenezer,' said he, 'hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' and he called his first son by that name, — Ebenezer Welltodo. Here the old pilgrim buried Rachel, his first daughter, a tall girl, they say, but delicate. She died when she was only fifteen, — died the first year of their settlement, came over from England. But the garden rose could not stand the rough winters of those times, faded, and died. The old pilgrim — he was only thirty-six or eight then, though — buried that rosebud under the great oak. When he was digging the grave, a woodpecker came and walked round on the trunk of the tree, and tapped it with his bill, and then stood close to his head and looked at him with great red eyes. He never had seen such a woodpecker before, nor any wild creature so tame, and called it a bird of paradise sent to tell him that his daughter was safe in the Promised Land. So he finished her grave, and lined it with green twigs which the oak-pruner had cut off from the tree, and covered her young body with the same — they had no other coffin — and filled it up with earth, and planted a wild-rose bush there for headstone. So this Rachel, like the other, was buried under a tree, and this Jacob also had his Oak of Weeping. I don't know how it is, but there has been a woodpecker in some of the great dead limbs ever since. Dear old oak! if there be 'tongues in trees,' what stories you could tell! You are as fair to the memory as to the eye. You shall never go to the

mill; too beautiful for use, you build what is worth more than ships, for there is a heart in you!

"Look there, where the old barn stood! how the ivy and wild grape-vine have come and covered up the rock, casting a handsome veil over what man left bare and ugly. So it is on all the roadsides betwixt here and town. One day the railroad embankments will be also green and lovely. First come weeds, — a sort of rough great-coat, then grass, then flowers also. So is it with all our destructiveness. Nature walks backward, and from her own shoulders casts the garment of material beauty on the human shame of Waterloo and Balaklava, and all the battlefields of earth. See how the rock is covered with vegetation: houseleek here, celandine there, and saxifrage — how early it comes out, close to the snow; while mosses and lichens grow everywhere! Beauty pastures even on the rocks, — God feeding it out of the clouds; he holds forth a cup, and every little moss comes and drinks out of it and is filled with life.

"What does it all mean? Is God so liberal, that, after drawing use for the customers at his universe of a shop, he lets the tap run awhile merely for the beauty of the stream? Use costs us hard work, but the beauty of nature costs nothing. He throws it in as I do the twine and paper with a pound of cheese. No; for that I get pay for in another way. He gives it, just as I gave little Rosanna Murphy, the Irish girl with the drunken father, who went to the house of correction for beating his family — thank God, I don't sell rum! — just as I gave Rosie an orange last Friday when she came to buy the salt fish. That is it, he gives it in. 'Don't charge anything for that,' as I told poor little Rosie, who had been crying for her good-for-nothing father, — we don't ask anything for that. I give it to you that you may be a

good girl and happy, and know there is somebody richer than you who takes an interest in you; to let you know somebody loves you.' How she dried her tears and did thank me!

"Well, it must be a good God who makes such a world as this, and when we only pay for the dry salt fish of use — often with tears in our eyes — pats us on the head, flings in this orange of beauty and makes no charge, 'so that you may be a good girl and happy, and know that somebody takes an interest in you, — that you have a friend in the world!'

"'Comes of nothing,' does it? 'No plan in the world, no thought,' is there? 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God,' — that is, because he is a fool. He must be a fool to think so, a natural born fool, a fool in four letters. Well, I pity him; so does God. Poor fool, he could not help thinking so. I do not believe in Dr. Banbaby's God, — a great, ugly devil, sending Elias and two bears — miraculous she-bears — to kill, and 'carry off to hell,' forty-two babies who laughed at his bald head. I don't believe in such a devilish God as that! it is worse than the fool's no-God. But there is wisdom and power somewhere! Think of all this, — sermon on the mount, sermon on the hill, sermon in the pond, in the oak-tree — a dear good sermon that is, — sermon in the wild-rose and the lily! Yes, that swallow twitters away a whole One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm of praise to God. How all nature breaks forth into voice as soon as you listen! I don't blame her; I would if I could. Sing away there, fire-hang-bird! buzz away there, humble-bee in the pumpkin blossom! there is an infinite goodness somewhere! You don't know it, but you grow out of it, all of you! The world itself is but one little moss, drinking from the cup

God holds in his hand. Ah me! if the Rev. Banbaby would come out here and read God's fresh handwriting, and not blear his eyes so continually over the black print of John Calvin and the Synod of Dort; if he would study St. Nature only half as much as St. Revelation, he would never have preached that sermon on the 'Damnation of the Unbaptized,' and declared that all such were lost, and especially infants, on whom God visits the sins of their parents for ever and ever, — which he did let fly on the Sunday after poor widow Faithful lost her only child, a dear little boy of fifteen months. No wonder she went crazy the next week, and I took her to Worcester.

"This must be the meaning of it all, — it is a REVELATION OF GOD'S LOVE. That is what it is. Consider the lilies of the pond, — they all teach this: If God *so* clothe the lilies in brother 'Zekiel's mill-pond, watch over them, ripen their seed thus curiously under water, sow it there, and keep the race as lasting as the stars, will he not much rather bless every soul of saint or sinner, O Rev. Banbaby? Oh, foolish congregations of self-denying men, who think you must believe in all the clerical nonsense and bad-sense which ministers preach at you! where are your eyes, where are your hearts, where are your souls that you make such a fuss about?

'Why this longing, this for ever sighing
For such doctrines ghastly, hateful, grim, —
While the beautiful, all round thee lying,
Offers up its low, perpetual hymn?
Would 'st thou listen to its gentle teaching,
All that restless longing it would still, —
Flower and pond and laden bee are teaching,
Thy own sphere with natural work to fill.'"

Mr. Welltodo is right; that is the meaning of it all. LOVE sums it up: "All things are double" — use this,

beauty that: Old Testament and New Testament are thus bound up in the same volume of nature. What a revelation of God's goodness this world of beauty is! How it comes to the tired young milliner, soothes her weariness, quickens her imagination, and then laps her in the arms of sleep, till all is joyous, blessed rest! No, in that rest she longs for another tranquillity, — the soul's rest in the infinite perfections of God.

How this mundane beauty comes to the calculating man, lifts him above his "sugars" and his "flours" he meant to spend all Sunday in thinking over; and shows him the heavenly meaning in this life of ours!

What a revelation it is of the Cause and Providence of all this world! God gives us use! "giveth liberally." You might expect it. But that is not enough for him. He adds another world, which feeds and cheers the superior faculties. There is use for need and virtue, beauty also as overplus and for delight. We ask corn for bread; God makes it handsome and it feeds the mind. It seems to me as if he could not give enough to satisfy his own benevolence. How he spreads a table with all that is needful for material wants, and then gives this beauty as a musical benediction to the feast, — a grace before and after meat! To a thoughtful man, how the sight of this wakens emotions of reverence, love, and trust! Who can doubt the causal Goodness which makes the fairness?

Men tell about "miracles," which prove "the greatness of the Lord," and "his goodness too;" that he was once angry with mankind, and sent a flood, which killed all the living things on earth, from the lowest plant up to the highest man, save only eight men and women and a troop of inferior animals whom he kept in a great box, which floated for a whole year on this ocean

of murder, and then let out the ancestors of all things that now live upon the earth; that he miraculously confounded the speech of men building a city, and they fled asunder, leaving their abortive work; that he miraculously plagued Egypt with grotesque and awful torments, and by miracle led Israel through a sea of waters closing on their foes, and into a sea of sand, which eat up one generation of the Israelites themselves, — nay, that by the ministration of one Hebrew man, continued miracles were wrought for forty years; and then, yet more wonderful, by another, at whose word water was changed to wine, the bread of five sufficed five thousand men, the wanting limb came strong again, the dead returned to life, — nay, at his death, that the very sun stood still, and darkness filled the heavens at high noonday, while the rocks were rent, the graves stood wide, and buried saints came back to light and life. Believe it not! To me such tales are ghastly as Egyptian idols and Hindoo images of God, mixing incongruous limbs of beast and bird and man. In this little leaf there is more divinity than in all those monstrous legends, writ in letters or carved out in stone. But the daily wonder of nature, which is no miracle, — that is the actual revelation of God's power and goodness, a diamond of love set in the gold of beauty.

Look all about you! What a ring of handsomeness surrounds the town! What a heaven of loveliness is arched over us! See how earth, air, and water are turning into bread! Out of the ground what daily use and beauty grow! Think of the thousand million men on earth, the million millions of beast, bird, fish, insect! They all hang on the breasts of Heaven, and are fed by the motherly bounty of infinite perfection. This is a clover blossom at one end of the stalk, at the other

end is God. Yes, all rests in him, flowers out of him, lives by him, leads us to him. All this material beauty of nature is but one rose on the bosom of Deity, overlooked by the Infinite Loveliness which is alike its Cause and Providence. Yea, the universe of matter is a revelation of him, — of his power in its strength, of his wisdom in its plan and law, of his love and his loveliness in that perfume of the world which we call beauty. Earth beneath and heaven above are greater and lesser prophets, gospel, and epistle; and all unite in one grand psalm, — "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, ON EARTH PEACE, AND GOOD WILL TO MEN."

SPRING.

How mighty are the forces in the world of matter, — attraction, affinity, light, heat, electricity, vegetation, the growth of plants, animation, the life of beast, bird, reptile, insect! Yet how delicate are the results thereof! It seems strange that a butterfly's wing should be woven up so thin and gauzy in this monstrous loom of nature, and be so delicately tipped with fire from such a gross hand, and rainbowed all over in such a storm of thunderous elements. But so it is. Put a little atom of your butterfly's wing under a microscope, and what delicate wonders do you find! The marvel is that such great forces do such nice work. A thoughtful man for the first time goes to some carpet factory in Lowell. He looks out of the window, and sees dirty bales of wool lying confusedly about, as they were dropped from the carts that brought them there. Close at hand is the Merrimac River, one end of it pressed against the New Hampshire mountains and the sky far off, while the other crowds upon the mill-dam and is pouring through its narrow gate. Under the factory it drives the huge wheel, whose turning keeps the whole town ajar all day. Above is the great bell which rings the river to its work. Before him are pullies and shafts; the floor is thick-set with looms; there are rolls of various-colored woollen yarn, bits of card pierced with holes hang before the weaver, who now pulls a handle, and the shuttles fly, wedding the woof to the expectant warp, and the handsome fabric is slowly woven

up and rolled away. The thoughtful man wonders at the contrivance by which the Merrimac River is made to weave such coarse materials into such beauty of form, color, and finish. What a marvel of machinery it is! None of the weavers quite understand it; our visitor still less. He goes off wondering, thinking what a head it must be which planned the mill, — a tool by which the Merrimac transfigures wool and dyestuff into handsome carpets, serviceable for chamber, parlor, staircase, or meeting-house.

But all day, you, and I, President Buchanan, the American Tract Society, the Supreme Court of the United States, all the people in the world, are in a carpet factory far more wonderful. What vast forces therein spin and weave continually! What is the Merrimac, which only reaches from the New Hampshire mountains to the sea, compared to that great river of God on whose breast the earth, the sun, the solar system, yea, the astral system, are but bubbles, which gleam, many-colored, for a moment, or but dimple that stream, and which swiftly it whirls away? What is the fabric of a Lowell mill to that carpet which God lays on the floor of the earth, from the Arctic Circle to the Antarctic, or yet also spreads on the bottom of the monstrous sea? It is trod under foot by all mankind; the elephant walks on it, and the royal tiger. What multitudes of sheep, swine, and horned cattle lie down there, and take their rest; what tribes of beasts, insects, reptiles, birds, fishes, make a home therein, or feed thereon. Moths do not eat away this floor-cloth of the land and sea. The snow lies on it, the sun lurks there in summer, the rain wets it all the year; yet it never wears out; it is dyed in fast colors. Now and then the feet of armies in their battle wear a little hole in this green carpet, but next year a handsome

piece of botanic rug-work covers up the wear and tear of Sebastopol and Delhi, as of old it repaired the waste of Marathon and Trasimenus. Look, and you see no weaver, no loom visible; but the web is always there, on the ground and underneath the sea. The same clothier likewise keeps the live world tidy and in good trim. How all the fishes are dressed out, — those glittering in plate armor, these only arrayed in their vari-colored jerkins, such as no Moorish artist could paint. How well clad are the insects; with what suits of mail are the beetle and bee and ant furnished. The coat of the buffalo never pinches under the arm, never puckers at the shoulder; it is always the same, yet never old-fashioned, nor out of date. The shoes of the reindeer and the ox inherit that mythical Hebrew blessing pronounced on those of the Israelites; they wax not old upon their feet. The pigeon and humming-bird wear their court-dress every day, and yet it never looks rusty nor threadbare. In this grand clothiery of the world everything is clad in more beauty than many-colored Joseph or imperial Solomon ever put on, yet nobody ever sees the wheel, the loom, or the sewing-machine of this great Dorcas Institution which carpets the earth and upholsters the heavens, and clothes the creatures of the world with more imperial glory than the Queen of Sheba ever fancied in her dream of dress and love. How old is the world of matter, — many a million years; yet it is to-day still fresh and young as when the morning stars first sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Not a power of the earth has decayed. The sea,

> "Such as creation's dawn beheld, it rolleth now."

The stars have been watching many a million years; yet in all that heavenly host not a single eye has turned

dim. The sun has lost nothing of his fire. Never old, the moon still walks in maiden beauty through the sky, and though men and nations vanish, "the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong." Centripetal and Centrifugal are the two horses of God that make up the wondrous span that draws the heavenly chariot; they are always on the road, yet never cast a shoe; and though they have journeyed for many a million years, are to-day fresh and fleet and road-ready as when first they drew Neptune, the earliest born of this family of planets, in his wide orbit round the central sun. How old the world is; yet well-clad, and its garments as fresh as if they were new, spick and span, in every thread.

What a revival of nature is just now going on in all Europe, Asia, North America, and the islands which dot the frozen sea with green. To the arctic world, which for months sat in darkness, exceeding great light has come. Truly here is the out-pouring of the spirit of God! Yet nobody preached the reasonableness of eternal damnation to the alewives, the shad, and the salmon, which now abound in our waters; but with no minister to scare them they know what they shall do to be saved, for the spirit of God comes into these mute disciples, who crowd up the little streams, float into the ponds, and spread in the great streams, and there drop, as an offering, into the temple-chest of the Almighty all that they have, even their living, and then, like the poor widow in the New Testament story, pass out of human sight, swallowed up in that great sea of oblivion where man beholds nothing, but where God never loses sight of an alewife, having provided for its existence and the accidents of its history from before the foundations of the world. From his eye neither the great sun in heaven nor the spawn of an alewife in the sea is ever for

a moment lost or hid. What new life is there in the air, which hums with little insects new-born, short-lived, yet not one of them afraid to die. Why should it be? The infinite Mind, which is cause and providence to all things that be, knows the little track of an ephemeron as well as the calculated orbit of this world, which teams its thousand million men from age to age along its well-proportioned path. "Fear not, little flock of ephemera," God says to them, "lo, I am with you also to the end of the world. Not a fly shall fall to the ground without my providence." In some warm spring day, in the shallow waters of a sluggish river there sports a shoal of little fishes, new-born, trying their tiny fins in waters which are at once their bed and board. Suddenly a swarm of little insects, just waked into new life by the sun, springs from the bank and darkens the surface of the water, for a yard or two, with a cloud. The fishes which play there spring into the air, and in a few minutes all this cloud of flies has been swallowed down. But the fly was born with his children cradled in his body, and in the bosom of the fish itself this new generation finds its garden of Eden, where it eats, if not from the tree of knowledge, at least the tree of life. So while the new born ephemera give the new-born fish a breakfast, the eater unconsciously adopts the children of the fly, nurses them in his body, and when they are grown to their majority, sets free these creatures, which had so strange a birth and bringing up in this little floating college of a country brook. Does God take care for oxen? asks St. Paul. Ay, as well as for man, and sends his apostles to these little creatures whose life is so brief. The perpetuation of their race is provided for, and they have organs which take hold on eternity. Truly the infinite God is fatherly providence to the little fly born in

a spring day, and perishing in an hour after it sees the light.

What wonders of nature go on all around us to-day! From the top of some tall house, look on the fair mantle which nature has just cast on all the hills about us, and which falls with such handsome folds into every valley. Go into any one of the towns near at hand, and see what there takes place. There is not an apple-tree but has put its wedding garments on. The elm has half ripened its fruit; the maple is making provision for whole forests of future joy; while the trees which the farmer plants for profitable use, and not for beauty, are white with the oracles of prophecy. It is a revival of nature, whereof the sun is the evangelical preacher. No city government warns him off from the common, for he preaches the everlasting gospel of the blessed God, wherewith he rejoices both old and young. There is no heresy in that. All nature hears him, and expounds his word of life. The silent fishes plentifully obey the first of God's commands; the tuneful birds repeat their litany, chanting their morning and evening psalm; all the trees put on their bridal garments, — these candidates for the divine communion, who have come to take part in this great epiphany, the natural manifestation of God to these Gentiles of the field and wood. They also share the Pentecost of the year, and celebrate their thanksgiving with such abundance as they can or know. What a Pentecost of new life is there! Every bush burns and is not consumed; yea, greatens and multiplies in its bloom and blossom, and the ground seems holy with new revelation; it is a white Sunday all round the town. How grand and vigorous the new blade comes out from the earth; and ere long these will be sheaves, and oxen will laboriously drag home the far-

mer's load of grain, which in due time will be changed to other oxen, and then likewise to farmers too, and so be resurrected in his sons and daughters. What a marvellous transfiguration is that! first the seed, then the plant, then the harvest, next bread, and at length Moses, Elias, Jesus! No Hebrew writer of legend could ever finish half so fair a miracle as this, wherein is no miracle, but constant law at every step. Last autumn in some of the pastures fire ran along the wall, and left the ground black with its ephemeral charcoal, where now the little wind-flower lifts its delicate form and bends its slender neck, and blushes with its own beauty, gathered from the black ground out of which it grew; or some trillium opens its painted cup, and in due time will show its fruit, a beautiful berry there. So out of human soil, blackened by another fire which has swept over it, in due time great flowers will come out in the form of spiritual beauty not yet seen, and other fruit grow there, whose seed is in itself, and which had not ripened but out of that black ground. Thus the lilies of peace cover the terrible field of Waterloo, and out of the grave of our dear ones there spring up such flowers of spiritual loveliness as you and I else had never known. It is not from the tall, crowded warehouse of prosperity that men first or clearest see the eternal stars of heaven. It is often from the humble spot where we have laid down our dear ones that we find our best observatory, which gives us glimpses into the far-off world of never-ending time.

In the hard, cold winter of our northern lands, how do we feel a longing for the presence of life. Then we love to look on a pine or fir tree, which seems the only living thing in the woods, surrounded by dead oaks, birches, maple, looking like the grave-stones of buried vegeta-

tion: that seems warm and living then; and at Christmas men bring it into meeting-houses and parlors, and set it up, full of life, and laden with kindly gifts for the little folk. Then even the unattractive crow seems half sacred, through the winter bearing messages of promise from the perished autumn to the advancing spring, — this dark forerunner of the tuneful tribes which are to come. We feel a longing for fresh green nature, and so in the shelter of our houses keep some little Aaron's rod, budding alike with promise and memory; or in some hyacinth or Dutchman's tulip we keep a prophecy of flowers, and start off some little John to run before, and with his half-gospel tell of some great Emmanuel, and signify to men that the kingdom of heavenly beauty is near at hand. Now that forerunner disappears, for the desire of all nations has truly come; the green grass is creeping everywhere, and it is spangled with many-colored flowers that come unasked. The dullest bush tingles with new life in all its limbs. How the old apple-tree blushes at the genial salutation whispered by the wind, the Gabriel of heaven, that freest agent of Almighty power, "Hail, thou that art highly favored! Thou hast found favor with God, and in due time shalt rejoice, and drop thy Messianic apples down." Already the multitude of the heavenly host is here, — the blackbird, the robin, the brown thrush, the purple finch, and the fire-hang-bird; these build their nests, while they sing, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."

What if there was a spring-time of blossoming but once in a hundred years! How would men look forward to it, and old men who had beheld its wonders tell the story to their children, how once all the homely trees became beautiful, and earth was covered with freshness

and new growth. How would young men hope to become old that they might see so glad a sight; and when beheld, the aged man would say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" Nay, wise men who knew the signs of the times would follow that star of spring till it stood over that happy country where the young child was, and then fall down and worship him. But now, in every year, in all lands, this Messianic beauty is born, this star stands still over every garden, every farm. It pauses over each elder-bush, and does not disdain the buttercup and dandelion, for like that other Messiah, these also lie in the oxen's crib.

What a solidarity there is between the world of matter and its inhabitants. They suit and fit each other, like him and her. From inorganic matter up to the highest man there is a gradual and continual ascent. Vegetation is a ring, whereunto animation is a living precious stone, with which God marries man to nature; and the world of spirit and the world of matter are no longer twain, but the two are wedlocked into one. How the world of matter is grateful to our flesh! To canny man the world is very kind. It feeds us, clothes, houses, heals, and at last folds us in its bosom, whence our flesh is a perpetual resurrection, and rises again into other men, while the soul invisible fares further on in the ascending march of infinite progression, whereof we see the beginning, and to which there is no end.

How the world delights us with its beauty,—feeding, clothing, housing, healing, the nobler part of man! Even the savage and the baby love the handsome things of earth. Little Two-year-old, a lumpy baby, as merry as a May-bee, comes stumbling through the grass, and loves to pick the attractive flowers, drawn by their very loveliness, that will not feed his mouth, but feed his soul.

Thoughtful man makes a grand eclecticism of loveliness from earth, air, water, sky, and rainbows both Joseph's and Josephine's coat, builds his house with architectural beauty, has painting, sculpture, and music to attend him.

What a fair sign of God's all-embracing love is found in this presence of beauty, — a sweet charm which fascinates us to refinement and elevation of character! It does not seem needful to the conception of the world that nature should be beautiful. Why need any star be limned so fair? The moon must walk, — but need she walk in beauty? Why should the form of the apple, peach, nut, the blossom of the Indian corn, and every little grain, be made so handsome? Surely they could feed us just as well otherwise. Why set off beast and bird with such magnificence, and so clothe the grass of the field, which is here to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven? Why make the morning and night such handsome children, and purple the anemone with the charcoal where heedless boys have burned the grass, and out of battle-fields bring such loveliness, beauty cradled in the bloody arms of strength? You can read it all. A great poet told it two hundred years ago: "O Mighty Love! Man is one world, and hath another to attend him;" and it answers to his being more tenderly than he thinks. So long as a single star burns in heaven with fire, or a rose on earth flings out her own loveliness, or the water-lily rings beauty's sweet-toned bells, no Hebrew or Christian revelation shall make me doubt the infinite loving-kindness of God, to saint and sinner too. Every violet, every dandelion, every daffodil, or jonquil, is a preacher sent to tell us of the loving-kindness of God. For that doctrine, at this hour there is a sermon on every mount, east, south, west, or north.

And how this world of beauty and use is a school-

house also for the mind, and a church likewise for the soul, to inspire men with devotion! In tropic lands, swept by hurricanes, rent by earthquakes, or desolated by volcanoes, I do not wonder that men believe in a devil who sometimes gets the better of the good God. Superstition is a natural weed in the savage human soil, which yet the rising religious blade overtops and lives down, and kills out at last. It is not surprising that everywhere rude but thoughtful men looked on the falling earth and steadfast sky, and saw the many forms of wondrous, yet uncomprehended life, and said, "All these things are gods," and sought to worship them. Nature is the primer where man first learns of God. There, "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no voice nor language," —yet the eye finds revelations: not only to Hebrew Moses, but to all humankind, God speaks in every burning bush, and the rising of nature's song wakes new morning in the soul of man. This perpetual renewal of vegetation, this annual wonder of blossoming,—what a religious revelation it offers to us! How it fills us with admiration, trust, and love! Every flowering bush burns with God, and is not consumed. With neither trick nor miracle, he changes water into wine on all the vine-clad hills of Italy, France, and Spain, and fills, not five thousand men, but five thousand times two hundred thousand, —a thousand million men, — every day; and on the broken bread of this meal supports the multitudinous armies of beast, bird, fish, insect, reptile. No little worm is turned away unfed from that dear Father's board, where the trencher is set, and all things made ready for the ephemeron born this minute, and to perish the next hour. Compared to this wonder of law, the tales of miracle, of the Old Testament or New, are no

fact, but poor poetry. They are like ghosts among a market full of busy men and women.

How old is the material world, and yet for ever fresh and young! So it is with the human world. If the race of men be thirty thousand years old, then there are a thousand fathers between us and the first man; and yet you and I are just as new and fresh, and just as near to God, as the first father and mother. We derive our humanity from him, not them; and hold it by divine patent from the Creator of all. Mankind never grows old. You and I pass off as leaves are blown from the trees, decay, and are exhaled, becoming but vapors of the sky again. So also do nations grow old and pass away. At the gate where Egypt, Assyria, Judæa, Greece, Sparta, and Rome, were admitted through, stand Spain and Italy to-day, beating at the door and crying, "Divinest Mother, let thy weary daughters in!" They will pass to the judgment of nations, and in due time Britain and America will be gathered to their fathers, but mankind will have still, as now, the bloom of immortal youth about his handsome brow. Thirty thousand years, perhaps sixty, nobody knows how long, has he lived here; still not a hair is gray, no sense is dull, the eye of this old Moses of humanity is not dim, nor is his natural strength abated; and new nations are still born as vigorous as the old, and to a much better estate.

The last three generations have done more than any six before in science, letters, art, religion, and the greatest art of bearing men and building them into families, communities, nations, and the human world. The religious faculty vegetates into new churches, animates into new civilization men and women. Tell me of Moses, Isaiah, Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha, Pythagoras, Jesus, Paul, Mohammed, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, — a

whole calendar full of saints! I give God thanks for them, and bare my brow, and do them reverence, and sit down at their feet to learn what they have to offer. They are but leaves and fruit on the tree of humanity, which still goes on leafing, flowering, fruiting, with other Isaiahs and Christs, whereof there is no end. As the tree grows taller, the wealth of blossoms is more, and so too the harvest of its fruit. When the woods have not a leaf, when the ocean has not a drop, when the sun has not a particle of life, still shall the soul of man look up to God, and reverence the infinite Father and Mother, love and trust; for God created man in his own image, and gave him to be partaker of his own immortality, and no devil can filch his birthright away from the meanest man. No virtue fades out of mankind. Not over-hopeful by inborn temperament, cautious by long experience, I yet never despair of human virtue. The little charity which palliates effects sometimes fails, but the great justice which removes the causes of ill is as eternal as God. So the most precious corn of humanity which I gather from the pastures of ethics and history, and out of the deep, well-ploughed field of philosophy, I sow beside the waters, nothing doubting. Some falls on a rock, where suddenly it starts, and presently withers away. The shallow-minded bring no fruit to perfection, and only produce ears of chaff. Some drops by the wayside, and covetousness, lust, vanity, and ambition, devour it up, rioting to-day on what should be seed-corn for future generations. Some is blown before bigots, who trample it under their feet, and turn again and rend me with their sermons and their prayers. But I know that most of it will fall into good ground, — earnest, honest men and women, where in due time, if not in my day, it will spring up, and bear fruit of everlasting life, some thirty-fold, some forty,

some sixty, and some a hundred. Hopeful mankind is not forgetful to entertain strangers, nor lets an angel pass for lack of invitation. Tenacious mankind lets slip no good that is old.

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world has never lost," —

nor ever will.

But while the human race is on the earth, — its continuing city, ever building, never done, — our individual life has also another spring. Death is but a blossoming out from the bulbous body, which kept the precious germ all winter long, and now the shards fall off, and the immortal flower opens its beauty, which God transfers to his own paradise, fragrant with men's good deeds and good thoughts; nay, where their good wishes and prayers pass at their proper worth.

There runs a story that one Passover Sabbath-day when Jesus was a boy of twelve, he stood with his mother at the door of their little cottage in Nazareth, — his father newly dead, and his brothers and sisters playing their noisy games, — and he said, "O mother, would that I had lived in the times when there was open vision, and the Lord visited the earth, as in the days of Adam, Abraham, and Moses. These are sad times, mother, which we have fallen in."

Mary laid the baby, sleeping, from her arms, and took a sprig of hyssop out of the narrow wall, and said, "Lo, God is here! and, my boy, not less than on Jacob's Ladder do angels herein go up and down. It is springtime now, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land, and the blossom of this grape-vine is fragrant with God. The date-tree, the white rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley, root in him. He is in your little garden out there, not less than in grand Eden, with Adam

and Eve. Look, how the setting sun has illumined all the hills! What a purple glory flames in the west, and is reflected in the east, where the full moon tells us it is Passover day."

"Nay, mother," said the thoughtful boy, "but He has left the soul of Israel for their sins, — so Rabbi Jonas told us in the synagogue to-day. Oh that I had lived with Elias or Amos, when the Spirit fell on men! I had also been filled with Him."

And Mary took up her wakened baby, who began to cry, and stilling it in her bosom, she said, "The sins of Israel, my boy, are like Rebecca's cry. God is more mother to the children of Israel than I to her. Do you think he will forsake the world? This little baby is as new as Adam; and God is as near to you as he was to Abraham, Moses, Amos, or Elias. He speaks to you as to Samuel. He never withdraws from the soul of men, but the day-spring from on high comes continually to the soul of each. Open the window, and the sun of righteousness comes in."

And Jesus paused, the story tells, and sat there, and while his mother laid the little ones silently away in their poor cribs, he watched the purple fade out from the sky, and the great moon pouring out her white fire, with a star or two to keep her company in heaven. And when the moon was overhead, there came two young lovers, newly-wed, and as Jesus caught the joy of their talk to one another, and smelt the fragrance of the blooming grape, there came a gush of devotion in his young heart, and he said, "My Father worketh hitherto; I also will work," — and laid him down to his dreams and slept, preparatory to the work which fills the world.

PRAYER.

O THOU who art always near to us, we in our consciousness would for a moment draw near unto thee, and feeling thee at our heart, would remember the circumstances of our daily lives, the joys we delight in, the sorrows we bear, the sins wherewith we transgress against thee, the grave, and solemn, and joyous duties thou givest us to do.

O thou who givest to mankind liberally, we thank thee for the world of matter wherein thou hast placed us, for the heavens above our head, for the stars that burn in perennial splendor, though the misty exhalations of the earth may hide them from our sight. We bless thee for the sun which above the clouds pours down the light, and creates a world of beauty, ere long to be opened to our mortal sense. We thank thee for this great foodful ground underneath our feet, now garmented with such loveliness, and adorned with the manifold radiance of thy loving-kindness and thy tender mercy. We thank thee for the grass everywhere growing for the cattle, and for the bread which the farmer's thoughtful toil wins by thy providence from out the fertile ground. We thank thee for the seed he has cast into its furrows, and the blade piercing the earth with its oracle of promise, foretelling the weeks of harvest which are sure to follow in their appointed time. We thank thee that in the cold rain from the skies, thou sheddest down the unseen causes of harvests both of use and of beauty which are yet to come.

We thank thee for the love with which thou givest thy benediction to everything which thou hast made. Thou pasturest thy clouds on every ocean field; thou feedest thy mountains from the breast of heaven; thou blessest the flowers on a thousand hills; thou suppliest the young lions when they hunger from lack of meat; thou clothest the lily with beauty more than queenly, and through all these outward things that perish thou speakest of thine infinite providence, which watches over every sparrow that falls, and holds in thy hand the wandering orbs of heaven.

We thank thee also for this great, glorious human nature which thou hast blessed us with. We thank thee for the body, so curiously and wonderfully made, fitted for all the various purposes of human need; and we thank thee for this spiritual part which thou hast breathed into this mortal.

We bless thee for this toilsome and far-reaching mind, which gives us dominion over the earth beneath our feet, and makes the winds and the waters serve us; which tames the lightning of heaven, and learns the time from the stars by night and the sun by day. We thank thee for that great world of artistic use and beauty, and of scientific truth, which the human mind has made to blossom from out this foodful ground and these starry heavens wherewith thou girdest us about.

We bless thee for the moral sense, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and that thou fillest our conscience with thine own justice, enlightening our pathway with the lamp of right, shining with its ever unchanging beams to light alike the way of thy commandments and of human toil upon the earth.

We thank thee for these dear affections, which set the solitary in families, and of twain make one, and thence

bring many forth, peopling the world with infantile gladness, which grows up to manhood and to womanhood in all their various forms. We thank thee for that unselfish and self-forgetful love which toils for the needy, which is eyes for the blind and feet for the lame, and is wisdom for the fool, and spreads civilization all round the world, giving freedom to the slave and light to those who have long sat in darkness.

We thank thee for this overmastering religious faculty, — the flower of intellect and conscience and the affections, — and we bless thee that by this we know thee instinctively, and have a joyous delight in thy presence, opening our flower, whereinto thou sheddest gentle dew, warming it with all thy fatherly and motherly love, blessing us from day to day, from age to age.

We thank thee for the great triumphs of the human race, — that while thou createst us individually as little babies, and collectively as wild men, slowly but certainly thou leadest thy children from low beginnings, ever upward and ever forward, towards those glorious heights which our eyes have not seen nor our forefeeling hearts completely understood. We thank thee for the truth, the justice, the philanthropy, and the piety which elder ages have brought forth and sent down to us, to gladden our eyes and to delight our hearts. We thank thee for those great, noble souls whom thou createdst with genius and filledst with its normal inspiration, who have shed light along the human path in many a dark day of our human history, and in every savage land. And above all these do we thank thee for that noble brother of humanity, who, in his humble life, in a few years, revealed to us so much of justice, so much of love, and with such blameless piety looked up to thee, while he forgave his enemies, putting up a prayer for them. And

not less, O Father, do we thank thee for the millions of men and women, who with common gifts and noble faithfulness have trod the way of life, doing their daily duties all unabashed by fear of men. We thank thee for what has been wrought out by these famous or these humble hands, which has come down to us.

O Lord, we thank thee for thyself, Father and Mother to the little child and the man full-grown. We thank thee that thou lovest thy savage and thy civilized, and puttest the arms of motherly kindness about thy saint and round thy sinner too. O thou who art Infinite in power and in wisdom, we bless thee that we are sure not less of thine infinite justice and thy perfect love. Yea, we thank thee, that out of these perfections thou hast made alike the world of matter and of man, providing a glorious destination for every living thing which thou broughtest forth.

We remember before thee our daily lives, and we pray thee that in us there may be such knowledge of thy true perfection, such a feeling of our nature's nobleness, that we shall love thee with all our understanding, with all our heart and soul. We remember the various toils thou givest us, the joys we rejoice in, the sins we have often committed, and we pray thee that there may be such strength of piety within us that it shall bring all our powers to serve thee in a perfect concord of harmonious life. In youth may no sins of passion destroy or disturb the soul, but may we use our members for their most noble work; and in manhood's more dangerous hour may no ambition lead us astray from the true path of duty and of joy. Wherever thou castest the lines of our lot, there may we serve thee daily with a life which is a constant communion with thyself. So day by day may we transfigure ourselves into nobler images of thy spirit,

walk ever in the light of thy countenance, and pass from the glory of a manly prayer to the grander glory of a manly life, upright before thee, and downright before men, and so serve thee in the flesh till all our days are holy days, and every work, act, and thought becomes a sacrament as uplifting as our prayer. So may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

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